Seventy-five years on: 'The Breaking Point'

The TLS *of April 9, 1908, carried the following article on Edward Garnett's play* The Breaking Point:

It is to be hoped that the Stage Society is not going to adopt the absurd policy of producing everything that the Censor has rejected. We are quite willing to grant that there are plays which, while wholly unfit for presentation before a miscellaneous audience and therefore rightly prohibited by the Censor, are quite fit for presentation before a special public in special conditions. Mr. Granville Barker's *Waste* was a case in point; the Censor would have failed in his duty to the general public if he had not rejected it, and the society would have failed in its duty to its special public if it had not produced it. But the fiercest opponents of the Censor will hardly, we imagine, contend that his black mark against a play is in itself a sufficient certificate of merit. Only upon some such principle as this, however, can we account for the production of *The Breaking Point*. Mr. Edward Garnett's play presents the *minimum* of dramatic conflict; it is a picture of mere helpless, hopeless suffering; and it weighs on the spirits like lead. People go to the theatre for all sorts of odd reasons, but we never yet met anyone who went there in order to be depressed. In *The Breaking Point* they were all unhappy on the stage and we were all unhappy in the audience. "How sad and bad and mad it was" and not a bit "sweet"!

The key-note was struck, as soon as the curtain rose, by Mr. Sherrington, who confided to a friend that he was a "bit down", and looked it. Mrs Sherrington, who had run away from him some years before and whom he had foolishly neglected to divorce, had turned up again and wanted to be taken back. Mr. Sherrington not only did not love Mrs. Sherrington (an obviously unlovable lady, with a sepulchral voice and a gift of crocodile tears), but did love another lady, Miss Grace Elwood; and, to make matters worse, Miss Elwood was about to become a mother, or feared she was. The question was, what was to be done? Mr. Sherrington proposed to take the girl abroad and live for climate and the affections; but Miss Elwood was unable to tear herself from her widowed father . . . Then Mr. Sherrington said there was nothing else for it; he would tell the old gentleman, and went off to do so. But the strain had already been too much for Grace; as soon as Sherrington's back was turned her mind gave way, and she threw herself into the river. Ignorant of the catastrophe, Sherrington had forced his way into Dr. Elwood's presence and told his shameful story . . . Seduction, suicide, useless remorse, and lifelong misery of the survivors – what a story!

That any reasonable person could have expected the Censor to pass this play for general performance we find it difficult to believe. A young girl and her seducer go anxiously into the question whether she is with child or not. Are you sure? Are you quite sure? What does the doctor say? And so forth. Can any one seriously pretend that such matters are suitable for discussion in a theatre filled with a miscellaneous audience of both sexes and all ages? No doubt it may be said that there is a large body of adult persons whom such discussions do not offend, who will take no harm by them, and who in fact have a taste for them which they are entitled to have gratified. Well, they have their means of gratifying their taste by joining the Stage Society or kindred associations for private performance of unlicensed plays. If at the same time these people have a taste for plays which produce sheer dejection, they will certainly get what they want in *The Breaking Point*. For our part, while we do our best to bear the inevitable trials and sorrows of this world with fortitude, we have no desire to subject ourselves voluntarily to unrelieved mental distress in the theatre or elsewhere.

Information, please

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, poet: any information, letters or memoirs; for a biography. Also any information on any English or Indian member of the Progressive Writers Association.
A. K. Mital.
C1/40 Pandara Park, New Delhi 3, India.

British pacifist movement, 1914–18: personal reminiscences, diaries, papers or photographs sought; for research purposes.
Philippe Lerat.
c/o Conseil Scientifique de l'Université de Lille III, BP 49, 59653 Villeneuve d'Ascq Cedex, France.

Thomas Drummond (1797–1840), military engineer and under-secretary of state for Ireland: whereabouts of any letters or papers in private hands; for a biography.
Mark W. Dean.
3244–39th St N, St Petersburg, FL 33713, USA.

George Meredith: any unpublished letters or their whereabouts; for a volume of Meredith letters to be published soon.
M. Y. Shaheen.
St Antony's College, Oxford.

Shakespeare humour: material of all sorts required – jokes, amusing stories, anecdotes (theatrical, pedagogical, apocryphal, etc) – from all periods and any country; for an anthology.
M. Schoenbaum.
613 Constitution Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002, USA.

Dorothy ("Arabella") Yorke, illustrator, member of the Pound-Lawrence circle and companion of Richard Aldington during his stay in this cottage (1920–28); any information on her illustrative work, whereabouts of correspondence etc.
David J. Wilkinson.
Malthouse Cottage, Padworth, Reading, Berkshire RG7 4TT.

Flora Annie Steel (1847–1929), novelist: any information regarding her life or work, particularly with respect to Indian connection; for research purposes.
S. Pearl.
4 Kidderpore Avenue, London NW3

Encyclopaedia of Churchlore: legends, myths, local customs, unusual gravestone inscriptions, wall-memorial inscriptions, and any other unusual facts associated with the Churches of England and Wales; contributions invited to this work, now being compiled.
John Robertson.
158 Bella Vue Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, Dorset BH6 3BJ.

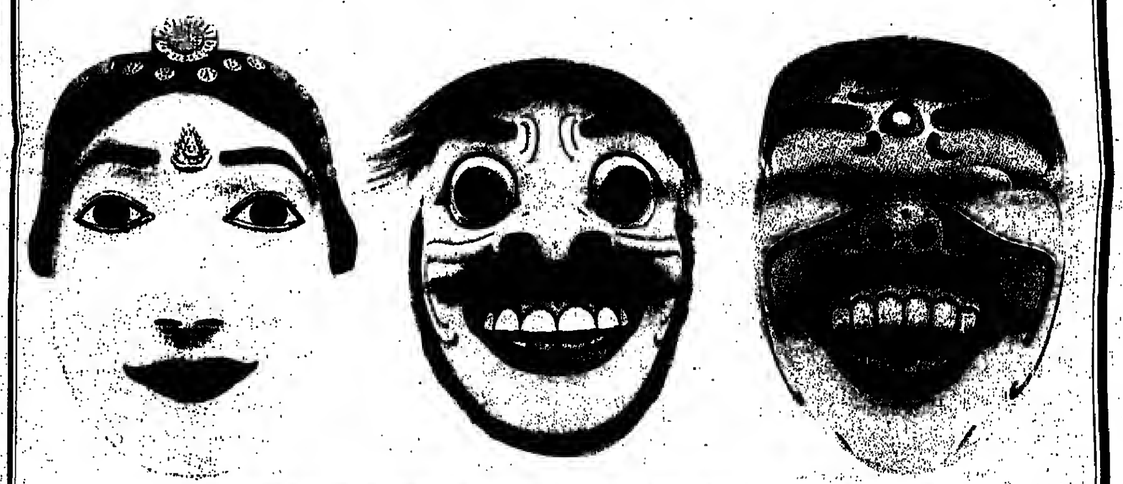
TLS
THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

FRIDAY • 15 APRIL 1983 • No 4,176 • 50p

Michael Howard on the Lebanese war

Darwinism since DNA

Geoffrey Grigson: The Oxford Book of Aphorisms



Two Topeng masks, those of the refined female character Putri and the smiling priestly performer Sidha Karya, with between them that of a Jauk dancer, reproduced from I Made Bandem and Fredrik Eugene deBoer's book Kaja and Kelod: Balinese Dance in Transition *(191 pp. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press. £40. 0 19 580469 4).*

John Skelton and his poems

'The History Men' G. R. Elton

Qaddafi's revolution The BBC abroad

Richard Strauss's early years

Fiction: Peter Ackroyd, Stephen Vizinczey, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala

Theatre: Howard Barker, William Saroyan, 'Julius Caesar'

The Henry Cole Wing of the V & A

THE TIMES

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX

APRIL 15 1983

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

Pacification and its victims

Michael Howard

MICHAEL JANSEN
The Battle of Beirut
142pp. Zed Press. 57 Caledonian Road, London N1. £11.95 (paperback, £4.50).
0 86232 142 5

JACOBO TIMERMAN
The Longest War
160pp. Chatto and Windus. £7.95 (paperback, Picador/Pan £2.50).
0 7011 3910 2

On June 6, 1982, the Israeli Defence Forces invaded the friendly neighbouring state of Lebanon. Three months later, after a prolonged bombardment by land and air, they completed the occupation of its capital, Beirut. In the course of these operations they killed or wounded; at a conservative estimate, perhaps 30,000 people and rendered a further 200,000 homeless. They themselves lost 368 men killed. In the immediate aftermath of the occupation, Lebanese forces which had been operating in close co-operation with the Israeli Army carried out a deliberate massacre of Palestinian refugees now left defenceless by the withdrawal of the international peacekeeping forces: a massacre which, if slight in comparison with other genocidal horrors in our century, will make the name Chatila as abominable in the history of Israel as are those of Drogheda and Amritsar in that of the British Empire, or My Lai in that of the United States. No attempt has been made to seek out or punish the perpetrators of that massacre. The Israeli government achieved its object in so far as it flushed its PLO enemies out of their Lebanese strongholds, scattered them throughout the Middle East, and established a hegemony over the Lebanon which they are unlikely ever to relinquish. But it was not a war on which Israel can look back with pride.

The above bald summary will no doubt strike some readers of the *TLS* as unfair. Letters will be addressed to the Editor, their rage equalled only by their length, protesting that he should have allowed space to be devoted to expressions of such bigoted anti-semitism, to so blatant an attempt to justify the Holocaust and to encourage the perpetration of yet another. From the defenders of the Begin administration, alas, literally anything is to be expected. Had not the Israelis, they will ask, been subjected to intolerable provocation, over one thousand being killed or wounded by terrorist actions over the previous fifteen years? Was the full extent of the PLO menace not revealed when Israeli troops discovered in their camps (according to governmental sources) enough material to equip one million terrorists, with heavy equipment sufficient for five divisions? Could Israel have safely delayed their attack for a moment longer?

The answer is that the Israelis suffered no such casualties, made no such discoveries, and lived under no such imminent threat. All this independent Israeli sources have been very quick to point out. But there were certainly some 12,000 armed Palestinians in the Lebanon, uninvited guests feared and detested by their unwilling hosts, training doggedly if unrealistically for the reconquest of their homeland, intermittently bombarding the settlements of northern Israel with long-range rockets and perpetrating a succession of nasty little atrocities in which women and small children were the principal victims. The Palestinians did not present a "threat" on anything like the scale suggested by Sharon and Begin, but their presence and their activities were sufficient to provoke a general sense of insecurity in the upper Jordan valley, and to add a tingle of excitement to the ski-ing expeditions on Mount Hermon whence the day-trippers from Tel Aviv could look across to the menacing radar masts on the heights beyond the Litani. There was the further assumption, much more questionable, that the pacification of the West Bank would proceed more swiftly if the true centre of gravity of Palestinian opposition, the presence of the forces in the Lebanon, could somehow be eliminated. Hence the curiously inappropriate title the Israeli government chose for their massive operation: "Peace in Galilee".

That the Israelis did face a real security problem on their northern frontiers is ignored by Michael Jansen, whose book *The Battle of Beirut: Why Israel invaded Lebanon* explains the operation in terms of deliberate Israeli expansion to the borders of Eretz Israel, the biblical land of Israel. Beyond this objective Ms Jansen sees an intention to establish a ring of satellite states under acquiescent governments; a Lebanon ruled by Israeli-armed Phalangists, a disrupted Syria, an intimidated Jordan, a divided Iraq. All these are indeed the avowed objectives of a small group of ideologues whose ideas are taken very seriously by some members of the present government. Ms Jansen admits that her book is not a history of the war. It focuses solely on the damage done by the war. It is in fact an indictment of the Israeli government for war crimes before the bar of public opinion. Ms Jansen does not ask how the Palestinians came to acquire, and abuse, what was virtually extra-territorial status in the Lebanon; that, she says, is "another question".

Israeli soldier at prayer: reproduced from John Bulloch's Final Conflict: The War in the Lebanon *(238pp. Century, 76 Old Compton Street, London W1V 5PA. £9.95. 0 7126 0171 6), to be published on April 21.*

She mentions the welcome which Israeli forces received from the Lebanese people only once and then by indirection; stating that the people of West Beirut did not receive the Israelis as liberators, "as had been the case in East Beirut". The siting of Palestinian camps and strongpoints in the middle of the most thickly populated areas she shrugs off as only to be expected. The picture which she paints is totally one-sidedly black.

Equally black is the now well-known study by Jacobo Timerman. *The Longest War* is also not a history of the campaign. It is a week-by-week account of Timerman's own reaction to it, and of his discovery that Israel, that promised land to which he had escaped after his martyrdom in Argentina, was not just an exalted state of mind but "a country like any other"; one capable, like other countries, of aggression, oppression and intimidation, of producing mendacious bureaucrats and militaristic politicians, a country where soldiers were no different, in their cheerful brutality, from the military anywhere else. That the latter were somewhat above the average in their concern for the morality of their actions he does concede by citing such cases as that of the heroic Colonel Eli Geva, who refused to accept responsibility for ordering his men to attack civilians in Beirut and resigned his commission, offering instead to serve in the ranks. True, the government did not penalize the colonel, and the rights and wrongs of his action were freely and universally discussed. But this, writes Mr. Timerman,

> does not yet make us rely on the sort of army that the Jewish state should have. Our army should have organised lectures, talks, seminaries [sic] and discussions on Colonel Eli Geva's act of courage and sacrifice.

If that is the real level of Timerman's expectations, it is hard to think of any country in the world that has ever existed, or is ever likely to exist, where he would feel thoroughly at home.

But the worst revelation for Timerman was that the majority of his fellow-countrymen supported the government and approved of the war; that Israelis in the mass were little different from the Argentinians whose failings he had learned to know so well, Begin, he admits, was "in perfect harmony" with his natural audience; the Israeli voter. The Sephardic

majority, solid in their support for Begin, remind him of the masses whm had supported Perón, "even when the Leader was drowning them in alienation and an economic crisis, creating the conditions for their repression by enauing military dictatorships. The loyalty of these classes, always a majority, towards charismatic and seemingly invincible leaders guarantees neither the rationality nor the health uf a political situation". He sees Israel, indeed, in danger of becoming exactly the kind of "totalitarian democracy" analysed and denounced by his countryman J. L. Talmon; ene in which the rights and pretests ef the enlightened minority are trampled under foot.

Jansen's work is a melodramatic indicment of a particular Israeli government, and of particular individuals in that government. Timermen's is a tragedy, the story of the betrayal of an ideal by the corruptien (as he sees it) of an entire people. But there is a further dimension ef tragedy in Timerman's account, of which he seems unconsciens. Week by week he describes the tragedy of the Israeli losses. "All of us", he writea, "are emotionally unsettled every night by telavisien reports announcing the names of our soldiers killed in action, their personal histories, their ages averaging a little over twenty, and the details of their funerals." But it was precisely in order to minimize such Israeli losses, the political and demographic consequences of which might be so aerious, that the IDF relied upon fire-power to achieve their objectives, bombarding Tyre and Siden for days and West Beirut for weeka; and in thia they had the understandable support of the great majority of the Israeli population. "For us", an Israeli soldier told the *Times* correspondent, Robert Fisk, "the death of ohe Israeli soldier is more important than the death of even several hundred Palestinians."

This must not be seen as evidence of Israeli racism, of what some critics call "Judeo-Nazism". It is, alas, the way in which Western peoples make war and liave made it ever since the First World War: using fire-power to save monpower. The massive bombardmenta, taeticol as well as atrategic, of the Second World War – Cassino and Caen as well as Hamburg and Dresden; the American tactics of "reconnaissance through fire" in Vietnam: ell this was justified in terms of saving the lives of our own forces, of minimizing the need to engage in the kind of close-quarter fighting in which these were likely to suffer at least as much as the enemy. Tyre, Sidon and Bcirut were destroyed precisely in order to spare the scnsibilities of Timerman and his friends; to ensure that the anguish of the nightly television bulletins should be reduced to the smallest possible compass. That is the way in which all industrialized demoeraciea make war. Israel need feel no special guilt in having followed the example set by the Americans and the British.

The Chatila massacre is another matter. Here the apeed with which the Iaraeli media and judiciary intervened, the theroughness of the investigation and the comprehensiveness of the Kahan Report restored the faith of Israel'a auppertera in the fundamental attachment to civilized values of the Israeli élite, and of their capacity in the last resort to bring their government to heel. But we cannot forget the attempts of Begin and Sharon first to conceal, then to ahrug off what had happened, nor the vociferous auppert they found in the streets when they attempted te do so. Nor can we clese eur eyes to the horrible logic inherent in the situation: if the Palestinians cannot be reconeilad, then they must be eliminated. To refer to the Holocaust and speak of "blood-guilt" is to distort a situation whose true analogies are far older and far more widespread. The question that arose in so many Western minds was not whether Israel was turning into another Nazi Germany. It was whether she was not turning into just another ferocioua little state, like those in the Balkans before 1914 or Eastern Europe between the wars, or in Africa today, whese governments exploit racial and communal tansions to gain populist support and are then driven on by that support to yet more ruthless persecutions. This is the real nightmare that haunts Timerman, and he is not unique in suffering from it.

The vital conflict in the Middle East is no longer that between Israel and the Palestinians. It is within Iarael itself; whether she will allew her fears for her security to drive her into courses which can only result in the multiplication ol her enemies, the militarization of her people, and the alienation of her friends. Her predicament resembles not so much that of the Third Reich as that of the Second: a highly cultured community, world leaders in the arts and the sciences, in scholarship and the lsw, dominating its neighbours by its wealth, industry and commercial expertise, its military institutions widely revered and copied; but driven, by a lethal combination of pride and insecurity, to seek ever greater expansion abroad and to develop a frenetic, self-destructive nationalism at home.

Those "friends of Israel" in this country and elsewhere who feel it their duty to apring to the defence of ber government on every issue and in all circumstances are not doing that country a service. Their place should be by the aide of those Israelis whose vialon of their country as a liberal, democrotic stete has net yet been elouded, whose polltical influence has not yet been eroded, and whose critical voices have not yet been silenced. It is possible to hope that the war of 1982 may have had mere far-reaching and more beneficiel results than its purely military consequence, the expulsion of the PLO from Beirut. It may have brought the political and military leaders to their sensea by shewing just how cloae they were sailing to the winds of domestic and international tolerance. On the other hand it may aimply have shown them what they could get away with, and encouraged them in their disastrous quest for "total security". In that case Mr Timerman will not be the only person whose nightmares will come true.

Revolution without limits

Malcolm Yapp

JOHN K. COOLEY
Libyao Sandsterm
320pp. Sidgwick end Jackson, £12.95.
0 283 98944 0

The atteetion of strollers in gracious St Jsmes's Square may be distracted by an incongruous flurry of alogans in one corner of the square. "Committees Everywhere", the notices proclaim. Since many of those who pass through tbis part of London are doomed to spend their lives rosming from one committee to another this announcement may seem to them to be no more than a statement of the unpleasantly obvious. They are mistaken: they are looking at the Libyan People's Bureau and what they see is nothing less than the outward and visible signs of the Third Universal Doctrine, the revolutioo of Muammar al-Qaddafi.

Qaddafi's revolution commenced on September 1, 1969. John Cooley's book begins with a description of the reception of the news of the revolutioo by Qaddafi's parents as they sat at breakfast on that fateful morning, listening to the radio at the entrance to their black goatskin tent in the Sirte desert: "Abu Meniar aod Alsha look at one another, instantly dumb. The speaker . . . is their son, Lieutenant Muammar al-Qaddafi."

Jost as instantly readera will recognize that vivid style of living history writing beloved by journalists. Soma readera may pause to wonder how the author knows such details and will investigate Cooley's footnote, which refers them to the testimony of several unnamed Libyan émigrés and to a short article. Were the émigrés present at tbat memorable breakfast? Cooley does not tell us. Nor does he explain why he rejects the testimony of Abu Maniar himself who teld Mirella Bianco (*Kodhafi: Messager du désert*, Paris, 1974) that he was staying with a nephew in Benghazi at the time. The truth of the matter is perfectly unimportant but Cooley's handling of the episode will give his readers cause te hesitate when they encounter unverifiable statements concerning more significaot episodes in the career ef Qeddafi. As a jouroalist, Cooley has access te sources which he cannot name and he has used these and other sources in his book to produce an interesting work which has something aew to offer but which the wise reader will approach with caution.

Cooley's purpose is to provide, in as lively a manner as pessible, information and analysis concerning the development of Qaddafi's revolution together with as much painless backgrouod as seems to be required. After a description of the inception of the revolution and the history of Libya he comes to his central contention. "The story of modern Libya is the story of oil", he writes. It was oil which created the conditions wblch produced revolution and it bas been oil wealth which has fuelled the continuing revolution ever since. For a detailed account of the Libyan oil industry students are likely to turn to the recent books by J. A. Allan and Frank C. Waddams, but Cooley provides a useful summary which does justice to the skill of the revolutionary leaders in easing out the oil companies and raising the price of oil. The revolutionaries were aided by special factors, such as the number of independent companies involved in Libyan oil, the premium quality of Libyan crude, and the contemporaneous world realization that oil reserves were finite. But it was the Libyans who combined these factors in a campaign of pressure which changed the face of the world enargy situation. The oil revolution also gave Libya financial freedom to undertake her social, economic and political experiments.

During tbis early period, wheo Qaddafi and his men were ousting the oil companies, much help was provided from an unexpected source. Cooley produces information which indicates that during the first five crucial years of power Qaddafi was protected by the United States, even physically protected by the CIA. Ha appears to suggest that tbis was a deliberate policy based on the conviction that Qaddafi was, if nothing else, anti-communist, but this suggestion may give too large a measure of design to US policy.

At the beart of Cooley's book is the question of the nature of the Libyan revolution and of Qaddafi's attempts to extend it. It must be said at once that it is very difficult for a Western scholar to write about the philosophy of Qaddafi's revolution without sounding patronizing. If Qaddafi had submitted the Green Books as undergraduate essaya he would have received them back with delitas and the comment: "Plenty of ideas but all worthless. Go and read. . . ." His social ideas amount to an inverted Hegelianism dominated by the family, almost like something which has fallen out of Mrs Thatcher's waste-paper basket. His economic ideas are what may be called bourgeois syndicalism – producer co-operatives run by owner occupiers end owner drivers. And his pelitical ideas are thet old favourite, direct democracy – an orgy of congresses and committees engaged in eternal discussion.

Are these ideas to be taken seriously? Some have been applied: Libya abounds in owner occupiers and committees. But it is doubtful whether people really count in decision-making. At the end of the first Green Book there is a chilling statement to the effect that whatever the theory, in practice the strong always rule. It may be that, as has been argued, this is a statement about the evil past, but in Libya it has also turned out to be a statement about the present, for Qaddafi has ruled Libya, whatever his official position. Indeed, some critics have argued that the succession of Revolutionary Council, Arab Socialist Union, Basic Congresses and Revolutionary Committees has been no more then e way in which he haa eliminated his rivals and consolidated his own power on the basis of a militarized Libya.

What is the aource of Qaddafi's ideas? He would answer, simply, the Qur'an, and this statement has led some to see him as an Islamie revivalist. In fact Qaddafi is not n revivalist but a modernist, and the distinction is important. The revivalist wishes to make the modern atate fit the Sharia, the religious law; the Islamic moderoist wisbes to make the Sharia fit the modern state. Qaddafi's interpretation of the Qur'an is all his own and he is at odds with both the traditionsl ulemo and the revivalist Muslim Brotherhood. He cannot accept the limits of Islam, or rather he recogoizes no limits to Islam: Islam la a universal system; the Third Universal Doctrine is based on Islam; Qaddafi's message ahd his revolution are for the whole world.

Placed as be is, in the eye of eternity, it is small wonder that Qaddafi has little time for Libya, which is oo more than the place where the revolution began. Hence he has made cootinuous attempts to join Libya with another state or states: Tunis, Egypt, the Sudan, Syria; to promote Arab unity, to revolutionize Africa; and to mobilize Islam. All these are only intermediate goals on the way to the ultimate world revolution. It is this vast restlessness on the part of Libya's leader that agitates all his neighbours, who are especially concerned by the mathods through which Qaddafi is alleged to promote bis aims. He la perceived as the patron of internatioonal terrorism, the friend of "Carlos," the IRA and the Blaek Muslims, a latter-day Old Man of the Mountain. Qaddafi's own bold statemeota give colour to this view, for example his February 1983 call at the Arab People's Congress for the upsetting of all oppressive governments, by which he meant to indicate all goverments but those of Libya, Syria and South Yemen.

Cooley denies that Qaddafi deserves his reputation as the prometer of international terrorism. True, he may have supplied meney, arms and training facilities to many revolutionary groups, and "like other world leaders of his time" may not hsve hesitated to murder his enemies, subsequently blaming the eethusiasm of his followers. But, Cooley argues, an innocent lack of discrimination in his early days, and the desire of the world media to find a villain, have unduly blackened Qaddafi's reputation. Cooley suggests that Qaddafi is not much worse thsa anyone else, and throughout the book contrives to give the impression that he is a man whose works are more limited and rational then his rhetoric, and that oven his rhetorie is reported very selectively by the world's press.

How should we understand Colonel Qeddafi? He has been compared *inter ollos* to Cromwell, Harun al-Rashid, Dostoevsky's Prince Mishkin, the Prophet Muhammad, Nasser, St Just, Savonarola and Trotsky. His eem model rulers ere said to be Umar I, Saladin and Nasser. Some writers have insisted that he is essentially a product of the desert. Born in 1942, he spent the first ten years of his life in a tent in the Sirte, desert and loves te return there to walk and think.

Other writers have drawn attention to the influence of his schooling and to his exposure to the attractions of Nasserism and Arab nationalism. A story from his aecondary school days at Masrata does contain an authentic echo of the man. Rebuked by an English school inspector for prompting a elassmate, Qaddafi informed the inspector that he had no place in the class as he was "an agent of imperialism". Such sublime irrelevance did not come out of a tent. Qaddafi la a combination of a Muslim nomad childhood, half understood Western ideas, and the leadership of a *rentier* state. The same could almost be said of the leaders of several Gulf states, whose policies have been so very different. He cannot be explained by reference to his circumstances alone.

PLO in Lebanon: Selected Documents (316pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £10. 0 297 78259 2), edited by Raphael Israeli, introduces, reproduces, translates and annotates documents that have been "carefully selected for their lasting political significance" from the "vast archives" of the PLO seized by Israel. These "reveal the ramified network of PLO ties with the Communist, Arab, Islamic and Third Worlds and the multifaceted activities of the organization in the political, ideological, military, administrative and diplomatic domains and throw light on the intentions, commitments and personal make-up of the Palestinian leadership."

A taste for the lapidary

Geoffrey Grigson

JOHN GROSS (Editor)
The Oxford Book of Aphorisms
363pp. Oxford University Press. £9.50.
0 19 214111 2

Aphorisms, beginning historically as definitions, are themselves not too easy to define. They belong to a distinct enough genus, expressions of succinct wisdem, ef explanatory comment derived frem and applicable to experience. It is true, yet not quite enough, to say that the aphorism is a grown-up proverb. The difference is considerable. In the family there are adages, maxims, mettoes, images, metaphors, symbols, epigrams and longer poems, even parablea, such as the tales of the Hodja in the Muslim world. Sioce tbere is great, from the 1600s, have been the supreme aphorists, tbere is aome point in turning up "aphorisme" in *Le Grend Robert*, majer dictienary, not only of words in French, but of their analogical associates as well. Among these associates – associates rather than exact synoyms – of the aphorism, *Le Grand Rebert* lists "sdage", "apophtegme", "brocade" ("maxime juridique, vulgarisée seus une forme populaire", from Burchard, eleventh-century Bishop of Worma), "fermule", "maxime", "pensée", "précepte", "proverbe", "réflexien", "sentence"; and refers one to the *sutra*, "précepte sanscrit condensé en un style lapidaire".

Certainly proverbs are the direct ancestor and the cleseat relatien. Every proverb, however condensed or robbed down to concisien, had once, like every folk-song, an author: it was and remains a *haiku* of the mind without any exact form save brevity and memorability. The grand difference is that the proverb tends to a larger degree of the poetic – allowing that the poetic essentially contains the real – whereas the aphorism, the item of self-conscious individuel wisdom, is each known individuol's succinct item of philosophy, always, or mostly, less popular than the proverb, as well as less poetic – if poetic at all – and attuned to a more restricted intellectualism. John Gross quotes an apt (though is it really an aphoristical?) remark from Elias Canetti, that "The great writers of aphorisms read as if they had all known each other well."

If the aphorism has no exact form and few irrefrangible rulea, we still recognize it as litterature. How much does it, or should it, exlst on its own – should it be an apophthegm which its makei bas devised as sueh, being himself a conscious aphorist? Faced with Gross's *Oxford Book of Aphorisms*, that seems a first question to ask and to dispose of. Is it fair to accept a statement, a remark, say from the run of a book or from some writer's collected letters, and exclaim: here is an aphorism? I happen just to have come across e letter of 1888 in which Chekhov has occasion to say to A. N. Pleshcheyev, the editor of *Severny Vestnik*, that "Lying – it is the same as alcoholism. Liars lie even on their deathbeds." Would it have been in order for Gross to have pounced on it and transferred it to bis *Oxford Book* – not that he has done so – as an aphorism?

My answer would be yea and no, or rather e reluctant yes. Are there effective aphorisms enough, which writers have designed as aphorisms, to fill a large aphoristic anthology? Should an aphorism, like each of the *Maximes* of La Rochefoucauld, be worked over until the expression is as perfect and pointed as the writer can make it? Again I would say, yes, ideally; and then I turn to ao earlier, and rather different, anthology, *The Faber Book of Aphorisms*, edited by W. H. Auden and Louis Kronoeberger (it is still in print, after all but twenty years, in paperback), to show bow those two editors took their aphorisms from the considered and the unconsidered (if unconsidered is quite the word); *currente calamo*.

Auden and Kronenberger cheat where they want to; ample as their choice may be from such conscious aphorists as Halifax, La Bruyère, Pascal, Chamfort, Johnson, Blake, Butler, Emerson, Valéry, they pick delightfully frem pecms, letters, essays, proverbs – Scottish proverb: The devil's boots don't creak. Swiss proverb: Marriage is a covered dish. Icelandic proverb: Every man likes the smell of his own farts. Certainly a collectien of aphorisms assembled by a confident major poet of Auden's kind is likely to indulge in laltitude. Such an editor as well will have a taste for the lapidary, the complete, the full stop – "there you have it" – "that you cannot argue with – or so we think" – "that is enough".

So – unfair as it may seem at least to those who fail-to insisi or to remembar that attempting wisdom isn't a trivial business – the *Faber Book* of 1964 may usefully help us to measure this *Oxford Book* of 1983, just as we could measure the *Faber Book* to some extent by comparing it – another backward jump of some twenty yeara – with Logan Pearsall Smith's *Treasury of English Aphorisms* of 1943.

The two books, each of some 400 pages, are divided by topics, the *Faber Boek* into sixteen topics, with a number of subdivisions, the *Oxford Book* into fifty-eight topics. Contributors to the *Feber Boek* number 451, to the *Oxford Book* 521 – figures which say a little abeut condensation and receptivity, but wil mean more if we list contributors to the one book who don't contribute to the other. In the *Oxford Book*, aphorisms or more and less aphoristical statements are of course taken from the major aphorists of Europe end America. Among contributors to the *Oxford Book* are the followiog as well: Maurice Baring, Betjeman, Elizabeth Bowen, Ernest Bramah, Churebill, Emily Dickinson, Gavin Ewort, Philip Guedalla, Hugh Kingsmill, Normen Mailer, George Orwell, Ouida, Pinero, Peter Porter, Paul Potts, Ezra Pound, Christopher Ricks, Dylan Thomas, Evelyn Waugh, Rebecca West. None of these – deduce from this what you may (including the matter of wisdom expraased and enforced by style) – are drewn upon for the Faber collection. Contrariwise these authors – to neme a few – appear in the Auden-Kronenberger, but not in the Gross: St Augustine, St Teresa, Dante, Brecht, Martin Buber, "Burckhardt, Degas, Sickert, Cézanne, Constable, Herzen, Marx, Mozart, Vico, Simone Weil, Karl Barth, Hovelock Ellis.

Misleading as lists of los and outs are in judging anthologies, these sample lists are suggestive, at least, of different attitudes, as well as differeot personal and temporal tastes, and estimations.

Judging by numbers, both books nearly agree about the relative importance of their major aphorists. They each of them take most from Johnson and Nietzsche, the questioo being partly but not altogether wbat they take beyond the obvious. The *Faber Book* surprises the English reader by – for example – selecting a number of aphorisms – and telling ones – from writers he may be unfamiliar with, even by name. Such are the Paris Romanian nihilist and moralist E. M. Cioran aod – a favourite, contributing more tb an two dozen modern entries – the Mauritian aphorist Malcolm de Chazal (*Pensées*, 1940–1944, etc) whose works are published in small editions in the Mauritian capital Port Louis (neither of these ia mentioned, for instance, in the *Oxford Companion to French Literature*). The *Oxford Book*, often shrewdly chosen, will certainly surprise many readers by including so much that is inferior, so much that is little more than wisecrack or smart journalism, or little more than cheaply and slackly expressed er both.

D. H. Lawrence, for example supplies the *Faber Book* with a single aphorism (and rather a good one – "The map appears to us more real than the land"). Lawrence supplies the *Oxford Book* with fourteen aphorisms which beyond contradiction may be described as weak and unconvincing ie the necessary sense of the universal, and all as poorly expressed.

Poor expression emasculates, if it does not kill, what might seem true and surprising, were it enly well expressed. It is this aphoristic fact which often and astonishingly escapes se clever a literary journalist as Gross, often apparently in a desire, in itself not unreasonable, to update his anthology and represent wisdom of living er lately living authors we all know about.

A shocking case is that of George Orwell. Seldom has a wise, clear-sighted author, or life-and-society commentator, been less of a stylist. Seldom can style – it is still a good word, still valid – have been less evident than in the fourteen remarks by him which Gross has exalted as aphorisms. Seldem have brief sentences by a famous author been compounded of more drooping English – "One defeats the fanatic precisely by *not* being a fanatic ene self, but on tha contrary by using one's intelligence" – as if e true aphorisi deali in such verbal collocations es "precisely", and "but on the cootrary", and "using one's intelligence", or needed to use italics for emphasis. Or again how flat as old aspbalt, and as dull, is this from Orwell: "The books one reads in childhood, and perhaps" – there should be no *perhaps* in an aphorism – "most of sll the bad and good bad books, create in one's mind e sort of false map of the world, a series of fabulous countries into which ooe cao retreat at odd moments throughout the rest of life, and which in soma cases ean even survive a visit to the real countries which they are supposed to represent." How is an aphorism to be detected when a writer (Professor Christopher Ricks) does no more than take a common Franch phrase and turo it about to read "qui s'accuse s'excuse"? Is "Read nt whim! Read at whim!" (Randall Jarrell) more than a not very remarkable if commendable instruction? Are we likely to be much exalted or amused by this improving loquiry from the diaries of Evelyn Waugh, "Where are you dying tonight"? Why has Gross been so afraid of overlapping and of including the essential, the inescapable, even if familiar? Why must aphorisms be so respectable?

Io a section to which Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, Nietzsche, Johnson of course, Hazlitt, Amiel and Yeats also contribute, ought we really to expect a wise-cracking confessional trifle by Dylan Thomas: "Somebody's boring me. . . I thiok it is me"?

Bobbing in and out of this to be aure entertaining seleetion, which oppears all the same more of a rake-in *ad hoc* than a deeply felt personal adventure, how at times the student of this *Oxford Book* doeaneed a heart y return, say, to the fierceness and openness of Blake, to "Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by incapacity", or to his

When a man has married a wife he finds out
whether
Her knees and elbows are only glued
together

or to the good-natured sharpness of Sydney Smith (of whom, alas, we are seldom given enough). And – another concero – how is it that so many whose sayings endure so trenchantly aod so excellently fit the living purpose of this anthology, are overlooked or underlooked? Not a word from Wyndham Lewis – why? Not an aphoristic word from *The Art of Being Ruled* or *Time* and *Western Man*? Only a single piece – and neither the sbarpest nor the wittiest nor the most rewarding – from Whistlar's *Gentle Art of Making Enemies*? And to place alongside Valéry and all the other aphoristic masters of France, only a very few scraps from that steel file of cultural conviction, the letters ef Gustave Flaubert? Etcetera.

But this dees seem to be a time io which a Flaubert might not be recognized er welcomed, and in which our Flauberts cease to be a force, and are packed eff to a corner of that funpark of our TV era wblch is now so half-heartedly labelled art or literature, end which is equipped with tea-rooms and roundabouts for the kiddies, and seme lions and penguins for them and their parents to gawp at. There are aphorisms pointing to such of us as come to feelings of that kind; but we must obstinately declare that these feelings can harden at last to justified conviction.

Does this temporal factor explain so many lax admissions to this book, and so often an inferior choice from the celebrated and superior? Is it in line? By tradition if we say "aphorism", we expect an aphorist; if we say "apherist", we should expect the uncommon writer so well able to set down the best of his incidental, occasiooal, self-cootained thoughts in the shape, each time, that makes them most effective, whether the writer is Pascal or Proust, Halifax or Lichtenberg, Santayana or Chesterton, a Gore Vidal or a de Chazal. A trouble here is not so much the overlooking of aphorists as the too frequent presentation of the commonplace as if it were enlivening. It is that, most of all, which legitimizes or insists on a negative review of this book.

"Aphorisma are essentially an aristocratic genre of writing", Auden and Kronenberger were able to declare twenty years ago. That essence is overlooked. So, too, is their rider that "the aphorist who adopts a folksy style with 'democratic' diction is a cowardly and insufferable hypocrite".

On the second page of this rather too "democretic" Oxford offering, comes an apt, if obvious, instruction from the eighteenth-century Prince de Ligne, that "the only way to read a book of aphorisms without being bored is to open it at random and, having found something that interests you, close the book and meditate."

Of course. But then sadly applicable to this book, which in many ways so fits our English 1980s. Is the preceding admonition (though hardly an aphorism) by an author we do not as a rule count as exactly elevating. Aphorisms sbould be literature, let us declare again, and "Remarks" – this particular remark coming from Gertrude Stein – "are not literature."

A clerisy of cliolaters

Roy Foster

JOHN KENYON
The History Men: The Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance
322pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £16.50. 0 297 78081 6

"Teach to look behind historians", wrote Lord Acton on one of those agonized index-cards which performed the service of a confessional for his intellect, and ended up in the Cambridge University Library for the puzzlement of posterity. "Especially famous historians." It is surprising that John Kenyon finds this "gnomic"; it is simply a statement of the impossibility of value-free historical writing, a reflection echoed by Lecky, E. H. Carr, and any other thoughtful practitioner of the craft. Nor would Kenyon disagree, since this approach is central to his own stimulating and opinionated book.

Surveys of historiography run many dangers. There is that of Whiggery, in the Butterfield sense: assuming an inevitable and self-fulfilling progression towards the light of pure knowledge. There is the risk of becoming a breathlessly galloping catalogue. And there is the difficulty of deciding how much knowledge to assume on the part of the reader, and how far to discuss the validity and durability of the works in question, rather than the contemporary importance of their writers. *A Liberal Descent*, John Burrow's recent study of selected Victorian historians, opted for allusiveness and density, and achieved brilliance; Kenyon treads a more pedestrian path, and will appeal to a wider audience. Partly by restricting himself to varieties of history he "knows about", he avoids giving us (to borrow his own phrase about J. R. Green) "an amalgam of other people's points of view; within a broad Whig framework". And though much of the material and some of the judgments are predictable, there is a healthy and quirky strain of prejudice throughout, culminating in assertions likely to be disagreed with by nearly everybody.

The theme chosen is the rise of professionalization, largely reflected through the careers of individual historians, with a coda at the end surveying some controversial subjects and their varying interpretations by successive historians (an approach shared by Arthur Marwick's underrated *The Nature of History*). Thus the themes of seventeenth-century history at the beginning recur, historiographically speaking, at the end. The opening section is, as one might expect, notable for a shrewd and vigorous treatment of Clarendon and Burnet, placed firmly in context and evaluated with discrimination; comparisons with the "history-writing" of twentieth-century politicians like Lloyd George are not amiss. In the tricky area of the Enlightenment historians and their influence, there is more to quibble about. Again, the material of Hume's *History* is analysed with authority, but the influence of truncated versions like *The Student's Hume* needs more exploration, and the whole question of how far the effects of this disingenuous masterpiece stretched. (As a subaltern in India Winston Churchill educated himself by reading Hume on hot afternoons; that curious combination of the exotic and the abrasive was to mark his intellectual development for the rest of his life.) Nor is the French-Scottish link sufficiently explored; Montesquieu's influence is discussed but not Voltaire's, while the remarkable Adam Ferguson deserves more than a reference.

The generalizing, synthesizing habit of mind was soon to be considered the mark of amateurishness rather than erudition; still, however, "history", as J. R. Green put it, was "part of that general mass of things which every gentlemen should know". But the eighteenth-century historian's conception of his role was more specific than that. Here Gibbon can be placed nearer the mainstream of development than usual; but Kenyon sees him, as do most, in the role of unique artist. Again, his powerful influence on later generations is worth expansion. The High Victorian attitude to him was a mixture of fascination and repugnance; but their children, especially those who dwelt in Bloomsbury, adopted him with delight. His celebrated views on Christianity had much to do with both attitudes (as did his amused and sarcastic retailing of sexual peccadilloes); it is apt that such continuities are unexplored here.

The first really surprising omission, however, comes at the transitional point to romanticism, when conceptions of both the nature and the function of history-writing altered dramatically. Kenyon takes us straight – more or less – to Macaulay; and the enormous figure of Scott, who did more to create the nineteenth century's sense of "history" than any other writer, appears only in two asides illustrating Macaulay's popularity. The Scott who is missing is not, of course, the author of *Napoleon*, or the collector of Highland folk culture, or even the editor of court journals. He is the broker of a sense of the past to Victorian novel-readers, the romanticizer of the resistance of chieftains (and Saxons), the incontinent rambler who none the less re-created sharp and sparkling actualities and interactions in past time; the spinner of a web which entangled Carlyle, Queen Victoria, John Buchan and Georg Lukács; the creator of the never-never land immortalized on shortbread-tins and denounced by Hugh MacDiarmid. Though Kenyon's sub-title refers to "England", the nineteenth-century English sense of history is so bound up with the world of displacement-activity and vicarious *völkisch*-ness created by Scott's novels that it is impossibly perverse to leave him out; recent claims for his descent from the eighteenth-century philosophic historians might add to the argument for his inclusion. Moreover, the obsession of Continental historians with England (Ranke as well as Thierry) owes as much to *Ivanhoe* and *Quentin Durward* as to the Rolls series or the continuities of the history of Parliament.

It is worth noting, however, that Kenyon has a robust dislike of "trying to recreate the past *in toto*" and "loose talk about getting under people's skin", which necessitates leaving romantic historians rather firmly to one side. Carlyle, in fact, is deliberately and entertainingly trivialized; according to Kenyon he interpreted the French Revolution as "a gigantic fart", and his hallucinatory visions of apocalypse are briskly attributed to the narcotics he took for his dyspepsia. Kenyon's enjoyment that Acton thought *Past and Present* "the most remarkable piece of historical thinking in the language" will not be shared by those who see it as a key text in the understanding of Victorian culture. But Kenyon's judgment of Carlyle, like his omission of Scott, reflects a firm sense of his own priorities, not always compatible with the intentions implied by his book's title.

With Macaulay, the focus sharpens; but here the difficulty is that Burrow's pyrotechnical interpretation of Macaulay as an ironic Burkean rather than a pushpin Victorian looms inescapably over any subsequent treatment. Kenyon's relationship to Burrow's book is unsure (his preface states that it appeared too late for him to use it, though references to it appear in the text). And though Kenyon, too, presents Macaulay the Augustan rather than the nineteenth-century preacher, there is nothing here as stimulating as Burrow's "great impresario", mediating how Englishmen saw their past, and anticipating Proust in producing a book whose consummation was its own conception. Similarly Kenyon repeats Hamburger's view of Macaulay as an insecure trimmer in politics, dreading revolution rather than complacently believing in progress. But his ambivalence did not stop here, and there is more to say about the change in his opinions between the essay on history which appeared in 1828 and the publication of the *History* which so signally contradicted the intentions the essay had set out.

Where *The History Men* is strongest is on the progress towards professionalization; there is an excellent chapter dealing with university developments, the rise of journals, and the whole shift in attitudes recently prospected by such scholars as Shelden Rothblatt and Arthur Engel. Figures like A. F. Pollard and Mandell Creighton come into new relief, though once again the non-professionals get a drubbing. There may be more to Buckle than Kenyon allows, if one looks back to the philosophic historians and forward to the *longue durée*; while his influence on the intelligentsia did not disappear overnight, if one takes only the example of George Bernard Shaw. Most remarkably, there is no mention at all of Lecky, whose histories of Ireland and England in the eighteenth century remained standard authorities longer than the work of any other Victorian eminence except Stubbs, and whose *History of European Morals* and

"Mr Gearing, Librarian to the Athenaeum, Liverpool", a late eighteenth-century drawing by John Nixon (d 1818) offered for sale in Christie's Great Rooms on March 29.

Rise of Rationalism were extraordinarily forceful, sceptical and frank for their time. On the other hand, it is surprising to find Sir Francis Palgrave accounted one of the "swallows" whom Maitland described as harbingers of true scholarship; his *History of Normandy in England* was roundly described by one reviewer as a "farrago of irrelevant nonsense". The assessment of Froude is even-handed and convincing, and the importance of Green's *Short History* fairly evaluated, though Green is another of Kenyon's personal dislikes. (Mainly on the basis of his letters, he is described as "coy" – which is as anachronistic as calling Maitland "flowery".)

With Stubbs, as with Froude, Kenyon is operating in the shadow of Burrow's devastating panache; but when he deals with the ascendancy of Bury and Firth, and the storm of misinterpretation about Bury's pronouncement that history was "a science", the comparative unfamiliarity of the ground lands added interest and Kenyon's own projected work on Firth provides an extra dimension. It is this period, too, that provides Kenyon with his closing theme, and the compass by which he steers through the minefield of twentieth-century developments and contemporary reputations: the conflict between the "scientific" professionals and the readable synthesizers. Here Kenyon himself advances roughly to the fore, striking invigorating blows left and right to the darling figures of the Book Clubs. C. V. Wedgwood is brutally dismissed: "she has gone on her way without a qualm, writing readable history for mass consumption without once asking, let alone answering, any question which modern scholarship would think relevant." The Pakenhams are condemned to the guillotine *en famille*, which is rather unjust. Churchill, and the claims made for him as historian (more persistent than might be credited), are shouldered aside in a glancing reference. The ludicrously inflated reputation of Trevelyan is demolished, as much for the "bucolic excess" of his private opinions as for the blinkered and flaccid sentimentality of his history; his *Short History* is referred to as "a contribution to the war effort", and the "Cambridge clique" who beat his drum sharply dismissed.

Trevelyan looms large in the demonology, because the Firth-Oman split of the early twentieth century is resurrected by Kenyon as a Trevelyan-Namier divide fifty years later; and to Kenyon, Namier and Elton are "the two greatest historians of the post-war years". The perennially fascinating Namier is treated sympathetically and at length, though the brilliant and perverse style of his writing deserves more analysis. Cuffing lightly, then swinging in with a sledgehammer, he was in this as in much else a Nabokov among historians: the deliberately awkward outsider, dissecting the rituals of his adopted society with the precision of a lepidopterist. What appeals to Kenyon is the relentless perfectionism, the decision to sink a mineshaft into one small area of a political culture rather than to attempt the profile of an age. This, to him, is the continuing issue on which historiographical parties divide and break.

But this assumption lights up the largest omission yet. Many would argue that the issue which today rends review columns and splits syllabus committees is not that between professional and readable history, but has to do rather with what historians see as the proper preoccupations of their craft: "old" versus "new" history, straight "politics" against the sociological-economic-intellectual totality. Kenyon rather complacently dismisses sociology as a flash in the pan, and ignores demography and quantification; he takes Lawrence Stone's unconvincing recent article in *Past and Present* on "The Revival of Narrative" as proof that the fashion for *Annalisme* is over. (This ignores, among other things, the fact that in order to buttress his case Stone was forced to claim Theodore Zeldin's dense and cross-sectional *France 1848–1945*, of all things, as "narrative history".)

But there is much more to "new history" than this, and it has a longer pedigree than even some of its practitioners seem to recognize. If Lecky and Scott are the most notable absentees from Kenyon's nineteenth century, the total lack of reference to the Webbs is equally striking in the twentieth. Extraordinary scholars, they blazed trails in labour ... history which later generations only slowly followed; their *Methods of Social Study* is central to any study of developments in English historiography. Not unconnected with this omission is Kenyen's avoidance of the historiographical developments traceable in the Communist Party Historians' Group between the wars, the foundation of *Past and Present* in the early 1950s, and the growth of labour history to an eminence and a sophistication far beyond the achievement of Postgate and Cole. The fact that this process has a distinctive ideological pedigree cannot be ignored; if *Past and Present* soon dropped its claim to be a journal of "scientific history", *History Workshop* has recently and rather self-righteously proclaimed itself "a journal of socialist and feminist historians". Kenyon's dismissal of Marxism as unimportant in the stream of English historiography not only ignores the powerful influence of Hobsbawm, Hill and Hilton; it also leaves out completely E. P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class*, arguably the most influential history book of its generation (if only because students bought it as well as read it). Quite possibly, it may – like that other perennial dazzler, George Dangerfield's *Strange Death of Liberal England* – turn out to be a brilliant singleton, more important for the debates it provokes than for its own intrinsic merits. But it jolted historical perceptions in a way that deserves, in a book bearing this title, a mention at least.

Kenyon may steer round such work on the grounds of supposed "unprofessionalism", or the traditional plea of "not my period"; but he similarly ignores Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, and the upheavals in the study of intellectual history in the early modern era. If the criterion of inclusion is that of "professionalism" and political preoccupations, it does not explain the absence of the other notable development of the 1960s: the emergence of the high-political behaviourists of Peterhouse. These moderains draw on a tradition in English historiography which reaches (at least as apostrophized in Maurice Cowling's intellectual autobiography) the heights of esoticism. To ignore both the resurgence of Tory nihilism and the reinstatement of radically "committed" history is to miss a valuable dimension which in many ways links back to Kenyon's earlier preoccupations: the theme, for instance, of how madam England avoided revolution, for which Macaulay, Froude and Halévy all produced characteristic answers, and which still defines a large area of discussion.

Indeed, a history of historiography might address itself profitably to such themes and preoccupations, rather than to the "history men" (the treasury titla is regrettable) themselves. The historians in question are not particularly attractive. The obsessiveness and misogyny of most pure specimens of the breed are striking – though this is probably a general feature of professionalized life among the upper middle classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Frederick York Powell vanished to London at weekends, "where he had a wife whom no-one had seen"; Tawney "went frequently to church, often taking his dog, less frequently his wife". Such throwaway remarks, made by contemporaries in the profession, betray the attitudes of a grim clerisy. Carlyle's "necromantic watchmen" probably best anatomized in Angus Wilson's *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*. (Namier, ever the outsider, loudly ridiculed the sexless lives of Oxford dons, and between his marriages maintained regular arrangements with respectable London tarts.) It is a world ready to take itself with ludicrous seriousness; "an erring colleague", remarked Tawney sadly, "is not an Amalekite, to be smitten hip and thigh", but a righteous historian on the scent of error knows no clemency. Kenyon is a true practitioner in being more gentle with the reputations of the dead than the living; and also in that what he leaves out is not infrequently

Recognition of a revisionist

Christopher Haigh

G. R. ELTON
Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government: Volume Three, Papers and Reviews 1973–1981
512pp. Cambridge University Press. £27.50. 0 521 24893 0

DELLOYD J. GUTH and JOHN W. MCKENNA (Editors)
Tudor Rule and Revolution: Essays for G. R. Elton from his American friends
418pp. Cambridge University Press. £27.50. 0 521 24841 8

G. R. Elton's major contribution to historical studies has, in recent weeks, been demonstrated by the third volume of his collected *Studies*, celebrated by his American admirers in a *florilegium*, and, at last, recognized by his nomination to the Cambridge Regius chair. In thirty-five years he has written twelve books, edited ten more, published ninety articles and contributed 250 reviews. He has been a tireless correspondent, advising and chastising his colleagues in a barrage of witty letters; an indefatigable committee-man, serving conscientiously in Cambridge and London; and an energetic promoter of new publishing projects. He has been a stimulating teacher, a careful supervisor, and a generous guide and host to visitors to Cambridge. There are few who have worked on topics in Tudor and early Stuart history who do not owe him debts; and even many of his critics agreed it would have been a disgrace if the Regius chair had been bestowed elsewhere. But though he has graduate students by the dozen and has chaired a large and lively seminar for many years, he has fostered and favoured independence and there is no "Elton school" among early-modern historians. Some make paraneid references to "the Eltenians" when an academic post in History is vacant and Elton's candidates appear, but his former pupils do not constitute a party (or even a faction): he has many friends, but not many followers.

In all the clashes over *The Tudor Revolution in Government* (1953) and the related studies, few have been willing to go to the stake, or even to the *English Historical Review*, in defence of the achievements of Thomas Cromwell – Elton, of course, needs no defenders, for his own pen is mighty enough. Except, for some reason, among the Americans, the "Cromwellian revolution" has not found favour with Elton's own students: a group of his former pupils is preparing a set of essays which will argue that change in Tudor government was gradual, accidental, and conditioned by immediate political needs. Even to Elton's admirers, Cromwellian reform was tangential to the central problem of the role of bureaucratic institutions in government. His conception of Tudor politics sometimes seemed anachronistic in its assumption that "Government" (Cromwell's "administration") could formulate and enforce a "programme" through centralized institutions upon a separate "society". The less formal "Tudor regime" sketched by Penry Williams, with its blurred distinction between "government" and "society" and its use of networks of patronage relationships, carried more conviction – and in his three exploratory presidential addresses to the Royal Historical Society (reprinted in *Studies*) Elton himself gave some encouragement to such a view. But if there is no "Elton school", it is primarily because there is no overarching Eltonian interpretation of early modern England and no unique and innovative method – though careful study of administrative archives may be all too rare, it is not uniquely Eltonian. Recent attempts to decry his elevation to the Regius chair as a political victory of "High Toryism" in the historical profession are misleading whatever his personal convictions, Elton is no tory ideologue in historical interpretation.

The latest volume of *Studies*, with twenty articles (one, on J. A. Froude, as yet unpublished), two transcripts of taped lectures and ten reviews, from 1973–81, presents varied techniques, topics and attitudes. Elton is as hard-nosed a tory sceptic as any could wish in his assessments of Thomas More and the Duke of Somerset, or in his doubts on the influence of popular grievances in the Pilgrimage of Grace or "commonwealth" preaching under Edward VI; but in his sensitive (even sentimental) presentation of Thomas Cromwell as an idealistic (but practical) constitutional and social reformer, he seems archetypally whiggish. In articles on Tudor parliaments and reviews on Stuart politics, Elton is aggressively revisionist, but even in his latest considerations of early Tudor reform (and, elsewhere, on the origins and course of the English Reformation) he still appears as an unreconstructed whig. For there is, happily, no *necessary* connection between Tory politics and tory history, or *vice versa*: many of these offering revisionist "tory" interpretations of pre-Civil War English politics are themselves liberals or social democrats. The apparent inconsistencies in the Elton canon reflect specific responses to the evidence on individual issues, an A. J. P. Taylorian perversity in challenging inherited views, and developing attitudes and interests.

There is plenty of evidence for development in *Studies*. The embattled, and sometimes embittered, Elton of the 1950s and 1960s, the defender and extender of entrenched positions, has given way to the milder and mere modest elder statesman of the profession. His fiercest fire is now reserved for dead historians (A. F. Pollard and J. E. Neale) and failed politicians (More and Somerset): he can now forgive error in others (Froude) and admit it in himself. It is true that his concessions are either small and specific (that Parliament was not asked for supply in 1572), or so general and vague that the extent of the retraction is not clear. He grants he made "extravagant claims" for Thomas Cromwell in *England under the Tudors* (1955), but is scarcely less extreme in "Thomas Cromwell Redivivus" (1977): Elton wants to have his extravagant cake *and* eat his humble pie. He has still a tendency to confuse the common consent of the historical profession with the private opinion of G. R. Elton ("the historian" and "recent work" usually mean "I"), but this is common enough failing among us (see, for examples, the writings of A. L. Rowse) and one can forgive almost anything of a man who adds new footnotes to his papers headed "Wrong" and "Untrue".

But although Elton still writes mischievous pieces about Thomas More, the most significant development shown in *Studies* is a shift in his main area of interest and activity, from reform in the 1530s to the legislation of the early Elizabethan parliaments. He has, when other men take early retirement, embarked upon a major new campaign: he has surveyed the field with three articles on the pre-Elizabethan sources for parliamentary history, weakened the opposition by a sustained barrage against Neale, and displayed his new weaponry in essays on the enacting clauses of statutes and the role of the Council in the troubles of Arthur Hall. In his future battles (since metaphors of combat come naturally to mind when considering his approach), Elton will, like it or not, have more allies than hitherto. Others are already at work on Elizabethan parliaments, and adopting anti-Neale stances; while Court politics, ecclesiastical and social pressures and local interests are also under examination. Elton's Elizabethan forays will have to link with the revising of early Stuart parliamentary history which he encouraged by his skirmishes along "the high road to civil war" – though it will be intriguing to see how his own emphasis on Parliament as a legislative assembly meshes with the concern of others for Parliament as a forum of factional conflict. For Elton may not find it congenial to be one general in a large army; he has always been most effective as a lone scout. It is hard to see him becoming just another revisionist: second only to his remarkable mastery of manuscript evidence, one of his strengths has been his independence, his determination to go his own way and wait for others to agree that he was right (or, at least, helpful) after all.

The significance of Elton's work on Thomas Cromwell was, however, somewhat restricted by its isolation from the scholarly labours of his contemporaries, and the attempt to reconstruct early-modern English history around the achievements of one minister was idiosyncratic. But Elton Mark II, the Elton who is now revising Elizabethan parliaments, is in the forefront of historical advance and heading in the same direction as others; his future contribution may be all the more notable for that, as he co-operates in the liberation of his new period from whiggish teleology. Some of his warmest admirers (and More's criticism of St German over the "Some say . . ." device is only partly applicable here) believe his best is still to come.

Perhaps it is by unfair comparison with Elton's own stature that *Tudor Rule and Revolution* seems a puny creature. One applauds the decision to mark (belatedly) his sixtieth birthday, and is glad that the eighteen offerings (six from former pupils) display the range of his transatlantic friendships and influence; but the master deserved more. The best essays in the compilation are those from Elton's own students, with the prizes going to Dale Hoak for his D. R. Starkeyesque assessment of the Edwardian Privy Chamber and to R. W. Heinze for a piece of Eltonian revision on the 1610 petition against proclamations. *Proxime accesserunt*: S. E. Lehmberg on cathedral choral establishments, F.A. Youngs on the administrative sub-division of counties and David Cressy (almost a pupil) on bonds of association. The legal historians produce solid entries, notably Maria Cioni on Chancery, W. H. Bryson on Exchequer, T. G. Barnes on Star Chamber and J. S. Cockburn on Egerton's campaign against Serjeant Hele – the last a well-told story.

But when senior historians submit inferior samples of their work, editors really should have the courage to say "No!". Mortimer Levine's survey of women in Tudor government is confined to the obvious quotations on gynaecocracy and eight pages of comment on the role of Henry VIII's first three wives in politics (with no response to Elton's plea for a study of the ladies of the Privy Chamber). Wallace MacCaffrey considers Elizabeth's parliaments in the light of revisions of early Stuart politics, but in doing so disregards revision in his own field: he relies heavily upon Neale, but ignores Graves, Jones – and Elton! Elliot Rosa describes Thomas Lupton's view on punishment, and gives cursory comparison with Thomas More and Thomas Smith. Charles Carter reports, from Sarmiento's published correspondence, the ambassador's own exaggerated version of his efforts to influence English policies on papists and pirates. J. H. Hexter, in his self-indulgent *History Primer* style, ponders the problems of quoting from Commons speeches when the parliamentary diaries offer discrepant versions of what was said. But the issue Elton had raised with him, that of the biases of diarists, deserved better treatment than Hexter's final, dismissive, paragraph; perhaps that was the place for Hexter's own little query, leaving the rest of the essay free for Elton's substantive problem. Hexter's essay is odd ("some say" silly), but there is in it some echo of the liveliness and aggression of Elton's own work, which is a relief after all the ponderous obeisance to "the Tudor revolution" and "Elton's era". What the volume lacks, of course, is a piece from Elton himself, an inveterate contributor to *Festschriften*. But the collection does stand in forceful testimony to the many debts owed to Elton by friends in North America, and, by implication and *a fortiori*, by many of us in Britain. And that – and not any political concern – is why his promotion is so welcome.

Shamelessly *pro*, outrageously *contra*

J. A. Burrow

JOHN SKATTERGOOD (Editor)
John Skelton: The Complete English Poems
573pp. Penguin. £6.95.
0 14 042 233 1

Reviewing Philip Henderson's *Complete Poems of John Skelton* in 1932, Robert Graves regretted that its appearance had probably delayed "for another ten years or more" the publication of a truly scholarly modern edition. In fact, readers have had to wait for fifty. Robert Kinsman produced a good volume of selections in 1969, in the Clarendon Medieval and Tudor Series; but otherwise the editing of Skelton has remained much where Alexander Dyce left it in 1843 with his two-volume *Poetical Works of John Skelton* – a magnificent pioneering work, but inevitably requiring replacement after more than a century. Recently this glaring omission in English literary scholarship has at last been made good: first by Paulin Nouss's edition of Skelton's play *Magnificence*, and now by John Scattergood's edition of his complete English poems (including *Magnificence*, but excluding the purely Latin poems printed by Dyce) in the Penguin English Poets series.

To judge by A. S. G. Edwards's selection of criticism in his *Skelton: The Critical Heritage* (1981), Skelton seems to have taken over from Spenser as the Poet's Poet. All eight of the twentieth-century critical essays printed by Edwards are the work of poets or novelists: Richard Hughes, Edmund Blunden, Humbert Wolfe, Robert Graves, W. H. Auden, G. S. Fraser, E. M. Forster and C. S. Lewis. Such a list of admirers does peculiar credit to a quirky and uneven early Tudor writer, whose work is often exceedingly hard to understand (impossible in Henderson's edition), either because of its references to goings-on in the polite and not-so-polite society of Skelton's day, or else because of its racy English – and also, if such a thing can be imagined, its racy Latin. As Skeltoo observed of one of his more outrageous centos of Latin verse, "*Industriosum postulat interpretem*" – it requirca a hard-working interpreter. As E. M. Forster rightly said, in his politely bewildered lecture delivered at the Aldeburgh Festival, Skelton is "extremely strange". Part of his strangeness – not least, one would have thought, for a modern poet – lies in the way his verse continually gravitates towards either the shameless praise or the outrageous abuse of contemporary individuals. His most characteristic modes are eulogy and dyslogy, especially the latter. Can any poet ever have written so many poems with "against" in their title? "Against a Comely Coystrowne", "Against the Scottes", "Against Gernesche", "Against Dundas", "Against Vanemous Tongues", "A Replycacion Against Certayne Yong Scolers" – not to speak of the several pieces which he would no doubt have dearly liked to call "Against Wolsey". A book has been written on 'Skelton and Satire'; but, although Skelton himself does use the term "satire", his other words are nearer the mark: "railing" and "invective". It was not for nothing that orations such as Cicéro's "pro Cœlio" and "contro Verrem" were universally recognized as models of the rhetorical art up to Skelton's time and beyond. Like advocates at the Romen bar, poets continued to deal in pros and cons. Defence and attack, praise and bleme, are the twin poles of their work; and they can switch from one to the other with bewildering speed. One of Skelton's early poems, for instance, "The Auncient Acquaintance", begins in the smoothly eulogistic manner of much late mediaval verse, praising tha lady for her "passyng goodly countenaunce", "goodly port", and so on; but two stanzas later she la being attacked for her adultery with a horseman, in Skelton's wildest railing vein:

Wyth bound and reboond, bounsyngly
take up
Hys jentyll curtoyl, and set nowght by
smalt maggysl
Spur up at the hynder gyrth with "Gup,
morell, gup!"
With, "Jayst ye, Jenet of Spayne, for your
layll waggys,"
Ye cast all your corage uppon such courtly
haggysl
"Have in sergeaunt ferrour, myne horse
behynde it bare."
He rydyth well the horse, but he rydyth
better the mare.

The strangeness of writing such as this liea not only in the language (horseman's language, in this case) but also in the social world which it implies. Under what possible circumstancea, one wonders, could such a poem have been written and even (as it was) printed in the author's lifetime? What kind of lady was the "old acquaintance", and what did she make of Skelton's portrait of her as a mare in season? E. M. Forster no doubt had such things in mind when he observed: "His world is infinitely remote; not only is it coarse and rough, but there is an uncertainty of touch about it which we find hard to discount." Yet the lines from "The Auncient Acquaintance" also show the extraordinary power of poetic utterance (rarely shared by tha prose of the period) to arc across the cultural and linguistic gap between Skelton and us. The secret of this power seems to lie most of all in Skelton's command of rhythm aod in what Blunden calls his "decisive feeling for accent". After two stanzas of bumbling, mildly aureate rhyme royal ("Of all your fetures favourable to make tru discripteion, / I am insuffycyent to make such enterpryse"), the verse suddonly leaps into life:

Wyth bound and rebound, bounsyngly
take up
Hys jentyll curtoyt, and set nowght by
smatt naggysl

This la ao extreme instance of that mastery of verse tempo which the poet's ear of W. H. Auden detected in Skelton's best writing. Here la a more subtle example, in the shorter line now known as "Skaltonic":

Semlo confectus,
Omnibus suspectus,
Nembi dilectus.
Sepultus est amongs the wedes;
God forgeve hym his mysdedes.

In these lines, from an abusive epitaph on a cantankerous parishioner of Skelton's parish of Diss, the rattling Latin attack ("broken by age, mistrusted by all, beloved by none") is slowed down to n dragging pace by the English words, with an effect that is partly scornful (no one bothers to tend *his* grave) and yet also richly evocative of mortality and decay.

One of the characters in the play *Magnificence* accuses another of using language "lyko the penne / Of hym that wryteth too fast", and the same eccusation can certainly ba levelled at Skeltoo himself: Few of his poems can be called complete successes – perhaps only some of the eulogistic lyrics in the *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell*, with their piercing sweetness ("Mirry Margarot, / As mydsomer flowre, / Jentill as fawcoun / Or hawke of the towre"), and the sinister dream-allegory of court life, *The Bowge of Courte*, about which C. S. Lewis wrote so well in *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*. His works tend to be disfigured by patches of slack writing and by the occasiooal monatroua digression. Yat in the most unlikely places, as in the epitaph quoted above, the authentic voice of Skelton ia heard. So there is a strong case for reading Skelton quite quickly and in bulk, and for that purpose volumes of selections such as Kinsman's will not do. Luckily, the policy of the Penguin English Poetis serieca is to print the poets complete; aod Professor Scattergood bere gives us all Skelton's surviving English poems, according to the canon oatablished by Kinsman and Yonge in 1967, arranged so far as possible in chronological order. 360 pages of plain text, preceded by a short introduction, are followed by 130 pages of notes and a substantial glossary.

Alexander Dyce did his work well. Half a dozen poems which he accepted as Skeltoo's (locluding "Woefully Arrayed") have been rejected from the canon, and three have been added; but none of these pieces is of much consequeoce. Nor do Scattergood's texts differ substantially from Dyce's in moat cases, although he has construeted them afresh from the original manuscripts and prints. Scattergood is sparing with new conjectural emendations, though be makes some good ones (eg in *Magnificence*, line 579, where the prints' *jurde hoyte* is emended to *jeu dehayte* and compared to French *jeu dehoit*, "joyous game"). Occasionally his cautious approach leada him to reject n necessary correction (eg Dyce's *ogryse* for *oryse in Bowge of Courte*, line 425); but in general this text deserves to be accepted as the ataadard late-twentieth-century Skelton. (No doubt the mystifying repatition of line 412 of "Phyllyp Sparowe", and a few minor misprints, will be corrected in a later printing.) The glossary which accompanies it represents the first serious attempt to gloss the complete works, for Dyce does not do so. It is inevitably selective, omitting some words and phrasea, such as "nall" and "Rode of Rest", which will puzzle most readers; and it suffers, through no fault of the editor's, from the general weakness of lexicographical work on English of the Tudor period; but it provides an essential aid which the reader of Skelton has so far been forced to do without.

Industriosum postulat interpretem. No one with any experience of such matters will envy the editor of Skelton his task of providing explanatory notea to a poet who found so many occasions for deliberate obscurity. Not only does Skelton delight in the jargons of specialists such as farriers, innkeepera and schoolmen; he also indulges frequently in local referancea and jokea which even his contemporaries must often have found difficult to catch. His Norfolk parish of Diss, the Howards' castle at Sherriff Hutton in Yorkshire and the King's court at Westminster all furnished him with allusions many of which must have been immediately intelligible only to the insider. Furthermore, refrains of popular English songs, classical Greek and Latin tags, phrases of scholastic and liturgical Latin, and scraps of Froncb, Spanish, Dutch and evon Welsh are to be found jumbled together higgledy-piggledy in hia work. It is entirely appropriate that the main speakor in his most fascinating and idiosyncratic poem, "Speke Parott", ahould be a bird notorious for ita indiscriminate liogiustic appetite:

"Morysche myoe owne shefte," the
costermonger saytb:
"Fate, fate, fate, ye Iryah water-lag."
In flattrying fables meo fynde but lyttyl
fayth;
But *moveatur terra*, let the world wag,
Let Syr Wrig-wrag wrastett with Syr
Delarag;
Everyman after his maner of wayes,
Pawbe une crouer, so the Welche man
sayes.

"Latin me that, my trinity scholard, out of eure sanscreed into oure eryan!", as Joyce remarks in *Ffinnegans Wake*. In such a stanza the words seem to hang together, in Skelton's own phrase, "like feathers in the wind". Yet the editor cannot treat "Speke Parott" simply as nonsense verse (though some of it is that), because the poem belongs, not to the Victorian nursery, but to the very adult world of Tudor academic and political controversy. It is, among other things, a heavily scrambled attack on Cardinal Wolsey.

Scattergood is ablo to improve greatly on Dyce's annotations in such difficult places. He is well acquainted with recent work both literary and historical on Skelton and his age; and the reader will finl many difficulties evon in "Speke Parott" resolved in a plain and businesslike fashion at the back of the book. It is a pity, however, that the general policy of the Penguin Poets series leads in this case to an undue amount of precious space being devoted to textual variants, oltea of very slight interest. Also, the editor is rather too ready simply to refer the puzzled reader to standard proverb dictionaries. So the note on "The devyll is dede" says merely "Proverbial (Whiting D 157)". Such notes certainly, by their very frequency, display the great wealth of proverbial material in Skelton – itself a matter of critical interest – but neither they nor indeed the proverb dictionaries help the reader to understand what the passage actually means. It would not be possible, of course, in a one-volume edition, to explain everything in a writer such as this; but the reader may be disappointed to find, for example, no notes (except a record of the trivial variant "plenary" for "plenarly") on the opening stanza of the *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell*, with its elaborate planetary and zodiacal references. The difficult words are in the glossary; but there is no way, so far as I can see, by which a non-astronomically minded reader can find out what time of year Skelton actually has in mind.

Despite its somewhat patchy annotation, however, this book deserves a very warm welcome. Professor Scattergood has, as the *Quarterly Review* said of Dyce in 1844, "brought to his task those best qualifications of an editor, industry, accuracy, and good sense"; and his edition will finally – after a disgracefully long interval – supersede Dyce's as the standard Complete Skelton.

Snarls from the scallywag

P. S. Lewis

JEAN FAVIER
François Villon
540pp. Paris: Fayard. 98 fr.
2 213 01194 X

François Villon seng not Siren-like, to tempt; barah was what he was, and pretty rebarbative too. Some people admire brach vigour aod the smad of an underdog with a chip on his shoulder. But that Villoo was a poet too is clear in the "incidental" pieces, some inserted into the two "major" works; be does not need rescuing for these. Villon himself rescued *them*, and may have taken them around with bim as a display-book of his talent in his ill-starred quest for courtly favour. Villon, Jean Favier feels, could oot be expected to fit in with the artifices of a princely court, at Angers, or Blois, or Nantes. Favier has a romantic view of his baro. But we might reasonably argue that if the princely patron paid the piper tben he bad a reasonable right to call the tune, and that if a pipar expected to be paid he conformed with the system.

Villon'a pretty *mbnble* life is briefly recountable. Born about 1431, he was boarded out with a chaplain of St-Benoît-le-Bétourné, who taught law in tha university of Peris. The adolescent Vllon foBowed the Arts course and eventoally, in 1452, became a Master. There, effectively, his academic career aod his advancement ended. He was too much one of the boys, and it was little use for him to moan in the early 1460s that

Bleo scay, se j'eusa etudié
Ou temps de ma jeunesse folie
Et a bonnes meurs dedié,
J'ausse maison et couche molle . . .
Mais quoy! je fuyoie l'escole
Comme fait le mauvaiz enfant.

The multiple misdeeda of the *mauvais enfant* need not concern us: none was particularly anliveniog, and he ended up dure, like a numbar of his collcagnea, for the gallows. Hanged meo bauoted Villon as much as they haunt those responsible for the cover-design of editions of, and works on, him. But that fate eluded Villon, and he disappears from history, trailing beblod bim as fulsome e paean of praise for his liberators, the court of Parlement, as ever a courtier (in a different sense) could.

But what else did ha leave? Two essays in the same literary form, the mock legacy and the mock will (the *Lais* (the Bequest) in the mid-1450s and the *Testament* in the early 1460s, in which with multiple *entendre*, primarily his eaemies are scarified. The multiple *entendre* apparently was calculated to have the infant undargraduate of the mid-fifteenth century rolling in the aisles. Exegesis is all too necessary, and can go to extremes aa entrancing as Villon's absurdity apparently is to the exegetes. Nor, apparently, should the vigour of the historian shake these darling buds: autobiographical accuracy is not to be expected. How, theo, does Favier deal with his few facts?

"J'ai longtemps interrogé mea témoins, et j'ai lu Villoo. Un jour, j'ai pensé qu'il m'avait beaucop dit. Sur lui et sur les autres. Sur le vrai et sur le faux: soa vrai et son faux. Bleo sûr, c'est un poète. Allais-je récuser le témoin Villon pour cause de génie?" No one knows his fifteenth-century Paris better than Favier, aod his fifteenth-century world, mental and physical. The result is a fabulous visioo woven about Villon: fabulous here in the sense of marvellous, because the characters in this, Favier's, world are real, are certainly "historical". Villon's world becomes alive, if perhaps sometimes to rather a devotional manner. Tho narrative moves easily; ooe shares Favier's enthusiasm, and is swept gently, io a slightly episodic fashion, through the life of fifteenth-century Paris; this isn't a difficult book to read, and, as one might expect, it is an attractive one. The myth of Villon gains yet more stature.

The myth of Villon? Here one may ask those infuriating questions: Who read him? And if few people did, is he important? It is not so much now a question of being put off by *génie*, but being dazzled by it. What *was* the *fortune* of Villon? He was read in his own lifetime – though wo have tbla on his own testimony, and comparatively few fifteenth-ceotury manuscripts of his works major or minor survive. He burst into print at the end of the century: but no copies of a putative *editio princeps* remain, and only three of the 1489 edition. But nine other incunable editions do survive; and the printed texts may have inspired a collectomania, in manuscript, of minor Villon pieces. The sixteenth century saw (as well as the appreciation of a Rabelais) some twenty-five printings, most of them based, between 1533 and 1542, on Clément Marot's edition published by Galiot du Pré in Paris. From 1542 until 1723, no new edition. Taste was too fastidious. Then, in the ninateenth century, following upon the first "scholarly" edition of 1742, Villon is seized upon by the romantics and the academics. Villon romanticized into a Hugoiesqua hero *à la* Viollet-Le-Duc, Villon sensibilitized *à la* Théophile Gautier; Villon the subject of critical editions and exegesis, volumes of commantery twice as thick as that of text; Villon remains in the twentieth century (when there are too many editions and commentaries to be able to count) the cult object of literary scholars and the starry-eyed.

Joan of Arc, as it were, was being burned while Villon was being born; and she was being rehabilitated when be was beginning his "scallywag" career. More is written per year on Joan than on any other single topic of French later medieval history, and, with the possible exception of Napoleon I, on any other French historical character. And yet in order to perceive Joan it is arguable one can only read the trial and rehabilitation-trial proceedings. One is tempted to suggest the sama treatment for Villon. But if one reads only the text the taste is dry and confusing indeed. As Marot pointed out, in order to understand the *Lais* and the *Testament* "il faudroit avoir esté de son temps à Paris, & avoir congneu les liaux, les choses, & les hommes dont il parle: la memoire desquelz tant plus se passera, tant moina se congnoistra icelle industrie de sex lays dictz. Pour ceste cause qui vouldra faire une oeuvre de longue durée, ne prelgne son soubject, sur telles choses basses & particulieres."

We need the guidance of a Jean Favier: this is the merit and the fascination of his *François Villon*. But, to return to the beginning, even when ooe does understand the "choses basses et particulières", is the taste of Villon less rebarbative, if now in perhaps a different way? Why do people like Villon?

A hero's early life

William Mann

WILLI SCHUH
Richard Strauss: A Chroolcla of the Early Years 1864–1898
Translated by Mary Whittall
555pp. Cambridge Universlty Press. £35.
0 521 24104 9

It was in 1936 that Richard Strauss made the acquaiotance of the Swiss music critic and musicologist Willi Schuh, though they had been introduced as early as 1919, at the première of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Vienna, when Schuh was still a schoolboy, but already a devotee of the composer. At their second meeting Schuh sought the great man's permission to assemble and edit the complete Strauss-Hofmannsthal correspondence, of which only a selection had been published. They remained in friendly contact and, before the composer's death, Schuh was accepted as the official repository of all Straussian biographical lore: he had edited a collection of Strauss's writings on music (published in English translation as *Recollections and Reflections*) and was the composer's personal choice as his future biographer.

Since Strauss's death in 1949 this definitive biography haa been impatiently awaited. Everyone who has researched the life and works of Richard Strauss, even at the level of programme-nota writing, has sometimes come up against a blank wall of non-informstion, and been obliged privately to conclude, more or less resignedly, that the full details must await Schub'a biography. Our informant was oot idle: every two years or so he released some handsoma *Shutterfleck*: a volume of letters, or an essay, to help us fill in a blank space. The authoritative, problem-solving critical biography hung fire maddeningly until 1976 when the present volume appeared in German, under a slightly different title: *Richard Strauss: Jugend und frühe Meisterjahre. Lebenschronik*. Few English-speakers, however devoted to Strauss, would admit to such a concept, one supposes, as "early years of Mastery", whence the alternative description of the English edition.

Strauss's life, up to his move, with his wife and baby son, to Berlin in 1898, was quite well documented by his first biographer Max von Steinitzer, who claims to have introduced Mr and Mrs Strauss to each other. Schuh has expanded our purview of the period with the *Letters to My Parents*, and others have published their reminiscences. Some of the last were obviously reliable, others more specious: a scrupulous, highly knowledgeable arbiter was needed. Schuh exposes attractive yet untrustworthy information, where necessary, and constantly easea verification with some new nugget of information. Pauline de Ahna was courted by Strauss for seven years: it was oot her parents who disapproved of the match, but Paulina who was convinced that she would marry beneath her, and could never, to her dying day, be dissuaded from the conviction that she had. Her case may interestingly be compared with that of Alice Roberts when marrying Edward Elgar. The couples were acquainted, the husbands quite close friends: Elgar introduced Strauss to the financier, Sir Edgar Speyer, who took care of Strauss's British earnings, but could not prevent them, during the First World War, from being confiscated, because Strauss was an enemy alieo. Sir Edgar was accused of signalling to the Hun, while staying at the seaside, just because he was of German extraction. Devotees of Elgar and Strauss need more detailed information about tha Speyer family. The present volume mentions one of Strauss's early girl-friends, Lotte Speyer, the dedicatee of a beautiful aarly song, "Rote Rosen", but does not explore her relationship to tha English banker, who was actually her uncle. Other members of the family played significant roles in the stories of both composers, but the descendants of the composer Wilhelm Speyer are less than precisely identified as yet.

Schuh is informative about the early life, a hard one, of the composer's

Richard Strauss in London, 1903

father, Franz Strauss, who entered the musical profession as a guitarist and zither-player before achieving fame as a born-player. His notoriety as an enemy of Richard Wagner and, accordingly, of Hans von Bülow as conductor of the Bavarian Court Orchestra in which Strauss senior played, is here set against the latter's gratitude when Bülow befriended young Richard, as conductor and composer: he even acceded to Bülow's request to lead the horn section at Bayreuth during the first performances of *Parsifal* in 1882, and took his son with him. Richard Strauss had been brought up as an anti-Wagnerite, but Schuh explains that this was at best half-hearted. Cosima Wagner soon had the young man eating out of her hand, and his connections with Bayreuth became close for a while, with eppearances by his wife as well as himself at the annual Wagner festivals there. Strauss even persuaded his father to meet Cosima in 1891, and Schuh gives a delightful vignette of the two strolling round the garden arm-in-arm, the old enmity forgotton. Eventually Strauss became disenchanted with Cosima's direction of the Wagner festivals, and suspicious of her motives, so that father Strauss could chortle "I told you so", as did Strauss's intendant at Weimar, Hans von Bronsart, who emerges admirably from these pages, a wise and benevolent influence on his brash, super-ambitious second conductor.

The Weimar years of 1889 to 1894 were anyhow of great importance in young Strauss's development: they included his love affair with Bayreuth, which resulted in his performances of *Tristan* in Weimar, with the retouched instrumentation for small theatres that has subsequently been in frequent use. At Weimar he courted and married Pauline de Ahna, the haughty battle-axe whose tyrannyhe truly enjoyed for well over half a century. We learn about her operatic work, as well as about her snobbish ways ("my Richard is so bourgeois", sha complained to Cosima Wagner, who replied "Think yourself lucky, girl"). During his Weimar years Strauss was the leading music spirit to town, a local celebrity with whose departure much glamour and excitement went out of the place. There he conducted the world première of Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*: "My dear friend, you are a great master, and have given the Germans a work they hardly deserve", he wrote to the composer. From a subsequent latter, after the first performance, we learn that the part of Hänsel was oot taken by Pauline de Ahna, as generally stated (there is a photograph of her in the first production): sh a was in bed with 'flu at the time, aod the Gretel took her part, because there was no cover Hänsel, but a cover Gretel.

Also at Weimar, Strauss conducted the first of his operas, *Guntram*, with his future wife as the heroine. He had toyed with many subjects before it, locluding Goethe's *Lila* adapted by Cosima Wagner, so some aaid, though the Kundry of Bayreuth leter disclaimed responsibility: Schuh sorts out the evidence with characteristic firmness. There was also a *Don Juan* opera, involving incest and matricide, brought on by reading Max Stirner's *The Individual and his Property* at the behest of the poet John Henry Mackay – one of several literary figures whose contact with Strauss la pursued by the author. Stirner seems to have been an influeoce on the hysterical sexuality of *Salome* and *Elektra*, as well as on the chaster egotism of *Guntram*. All these people and others, such as Ludwig Thuillo, Alexander Ritter, Friedrich Rösch, and Mahler also, were known friends and colleagues of Strauss, and Schuh brings all these relationships more clearly into focus. Of major interest is the successful investigation, with new evidence, of Strauss's love-affair with Dora Wihan-Woiss, the estranged wife of the cellist Hanus Wihan (for whom Dvorak composed his B minor Cello Concerto, though Schuh forgets to mention this).

In lote life Strauss drew attention to the extent that the composer as "human being visibly plays a part" in his music. Stile buns, we may reply, thinking of *Ein Heldenleben* and the Domestic Symphony, and perhaps further considering *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Don Juan* (are Dora and Pauline, perhaps, the melodious ladies in B major and G major, and if so which is which?) Schuh actually plays down, rightly, the autobiographical element in *Ein Heldenleben*, and the achievemeot of this first instalment is to contest Strauss'a dictum with new insights loto his development as man and artist. Of comment about Strauss's music there is a little, and illumioating, but less than we might expect from the laading authority oo tha composer. Mary Whittall's English traoslation reads agreeably: very occasionally a word disturbs the reader, and reference to the German edition finds her oodding. The task is well done and the index is fuller, but not the bibliography, though publication of work on Strauss has continued since the German edition was published. We await Schuh's second volume eagerly.

Anthologies of promise

Peter Kemp

BILL BUFORD (Editor)
Granta 7: Best of Young British Novelists
320pp. Penguin/Granta. £3.50.
0 14 00 6833 3

Dissonance is the keynote of *Granta's* "Best of Young British Novelists", a collection of commissioned pieces by the twenty young writers who are the subject of the Book Marketing Council's current publicity campaign. Alienation is a favoured theme: fish out of water flounder in a number of the stories; outsiders are central to most of them. And there is a marked discrepancy, too, between some of the pieces printed here and the reputations they supposedly uphold.

The theme of disorientation is established with the opening extract from Martin Amis's forthcoming novel. Taking a hint, perhaps, from his father's *One Fat Englishman*, "Money" sets another fat Englishman lurching aggressively through New York: hefty sluggad off balance by drink, jealousy, drugs and jet-lag, he's presented as an almost murderously malign misfit. In a cosily explicit piece – "The train was soon slowing down to a rhythmic chunt, orchestrating B.J.'s fluttering orgasm. . . . Now, damn it, her knickers were damp" – Ursula Bentley reverses Amis's transatlantic formula and sends an American careering through Europe. Aiming to sound knowledgeably international, her story stays knowingly *Cosmopolitan*.

William Boyd's skeletal contribution, "Extracts from the Journal of Flying Officer J.", pin-points alienation in the crabbed diary-entries of a man who is clenchedly conventional. Buchi Emecheta takes a more relaxed look at not fitting in. Amiably discursive, her memories of her African schooldays are strewn with instances of uprootedness. Pulled out of traditional bush life and transplanted to the city, her parents wilt bemusedly. Their daughter's school is staffed with uncomprehending foreigners – maidon missionaries from Britain – and its pupils seem hybrid: "These girls, the modern girls of twentieth-century Africa, still possessed their grandparents' voices", reflects the narrator as she hears them singing imported hymns in indigenous tones. She herself – with tribal markings on her face and individual thinking behind it – likewise consists of jarring elements. Her ambition to write is an attempt to harmonize them: dealing with contemporary subjects, she will still remain "a story-teller like our old mothers at home in Ibuza". In Kazuo Ishiguro's piece of childhood reminiscence, on the other hand, art does the opposite of bringing things together: here an old fascist painter is ostracized by nervous new democrats.

Too most suavely witty treatment of being out of step is Adam Mars-Jones's survey of a gay disco in Virginia at Hallowe'an – when, he notes, "everything is weird, so nothing is weird. Why else would it be the major gay festival?" Bits of bizarrerie are dotted inventively round. A hollowed pumpkin casts an eerie light on things – "Mounted inside it, wedged into the flesh, is a strobe-light which gives off a bone-white flash. . . . The scooped-out skull, with its out-sticking pieces of metal and wire, looks like propaganda against electroshock therapy" – while the pumpkin's mildly psychotropic seeds, chewed by one of the dancers, also throw a garish flicker over reality. In the fancy-dress atmosphere, variance becomes uniform, travesty conventional: and outside, as well, there is institutionalized zaniness: "of course in Virginia, the statutes of the Alcohol Beverages Commission prohibit the supply of alcohol to homosexuals". Philip Norman has a sardonic story set in the south of America too: in his case, Tennessee. Picking their way across unfamiliar territory, two English television men interview a veteran Blues singer in his dilapidated shack; as he fails to fit their preconceived ideas, friction and hostility are generated.

Keeping up the anthology's preoccupation, Shiva Naipaul rather inconsequentially depicts a wealthy woman havering her way into a smelly slum – drawn from affluence towards effluence, it is implied, by some primitive instinct. Avoiding being impelled by instinct is the main concern of Clive Sinclair's farcically Kafkaesque protagonist, an ant with an antipathy to mating and then dying as biology dictates. Graham Swift also opts for a non-human subject: the eel is the hero of his extract from a work in progress – an exuberantly informative piece teeming with facts about the creature's twisty habits. As slippery as eels but far less lively are the oddly intertwined bunch in Lisa St Aubin de Teran's "The Five of Us". Entangled with no enigmatic mate – "still the same stranger of our first days" and "very beautiful in a strange passive way" – the heroine, a Jean Rhys-ish figure, drifts around Italy with him and two sibylline side-kicks, robbing banks and pilfering from department stores. Political motives for this are mysteriously alluded to, but about them – as about everything central to her characters – the author remains emphatically non-committal.

The sample from A. N. Wilson's new book snaps everything into place, and rather tetchily. In particular, its account of a solitary boy tormented at school sounds both flat and shrill: a nightmare crescendo of stereotype – an "obesely ugly" bully, a prissily pederastic headmaster whose wife is "a well-hosomed sadist", a diet of "cheesy milk" and "half-cooked sausages", "a fat matron with a warty face". Cruelty is catalogued with a subfusc sourness, starchy phrases and well-pressed sentences emphasizing the savagery of what's inside them. Perhaps in the context of the completed book, things will look more subtle. But, as represented here, the novel seems a marked dropping off from the more substantial achievement of *Wise Virgin* and back to the thin-lipped stridency of some of Wilson's earlier work.

It's disphiting, in an anthology designed to promote the promise of younger British writers, to find Wilson apparently regressing. And, from this point of view, the Amis chapter is also disheartening. For all its verbal energy it ultimately looks, like much of Amis's fiction, both feverish and enervated. Good at galvanizing prose into something sporadically exciting, he is less successful in shaking his characters out of a lurid inertness. It is noticeable here that his machines are fuelled with far more imaginative power than his people. Ominously, too, there's a readiness to fall back on the same formulae and personnel. Like *Other People*, "Money" drags a disturbed protagonist through urban hellishness. Sometimes, it virtually duplicates motifs from that novel. "Life is made of fear", *Other People* said. "Some people eat fear soup three times a day. Some people eat fear soup all the meals there are." Hardly striking new ground, "Money" observes that "Fear walks tall on this planet. Fear has really got the whammy on all of us down here. Fear takes no shit from anyone." As is also routine in Amis, teeth come in for regular inspection. The narrator's jaw throbs from a raging abscess; an old TV trouper has a "scalloped blaze of . . . bridgework"; "eighty grand's worth of dental work" packs an actor's mouth, while a wealthy backer brandishes "a king's ransom of orthodonture"; even an airport has "hot, dental lights". Introduced with visits to the dentist in *The Rachel Papers* and kept in view in later books through nightmares about losing teeth or violence in which this actually happens, teeth are clearly points of some significance to Amis – perhaps because they're so like his characters: prone to rottenness and pain, capable of inflicting injury but all too easily smashed.

In this anthology, the biggest reputations often seem to be resting on the flimsiest foundations. In Salman Rushdie's case, to fact, there's hardly anything there at all – less than three pages offering a hollow re-working of the Sacred Grove story, in which an interviewer is slaughtered by an interviewee with a bread-knife. Largely constructed of glued-together cliché – "unable to conceal my triumph", "filled with insane joy", "I think that was when I realized that I would have to kill him" – this piece, "The Golden Bough", isn't capable of sustaining anything of weight. Feeblor still is Ian McEwan's account of the writing of his libretto for *Or Shall We Die?* For this oratorio, he explains, he sought a style that could "express public themes without pomposity and private feelings without bathos". Sadly, this has eluded him here. Pondering the nuclear arms race, McEwan comes up with insights of unassailable banality: "It was as if each side prepared for war because it saw the other doing the same." If peace is to be established, he declares, a "shift from violence" must occur "within individuals in sufficient numbers". Around these perceptions, he spreads garnerings of everything from physics to feminism. Modishly, he decries Newton, and dismisses "Logic, discipline, objectivity, thought unmuddled by emotion" as "patriarchal values". True to his scorn for such restricting qualities, he sometimes attains a style of liberated gibberish: "To bind intellect to our deepest intuition, to dissolve the sterile division between what is 'out there' and what is 'in here', to grasp that the *Too*, our science and our art describe the same reality – to be whole – would be to be incapable of devising or dropping a nuclear bomb." For McEwan, salvation can be achieved by coming down on one side of a crude dichotomy: "Shall there be womanly times, or shall we die?"

Womanly times are what Pat Barker presents. Set in a Northern pub as a Ripper-like psychopath prowls the streets, her extract shows a group of prostitutes huddled over their drinks in female solidarity. Opening with a dank for the lavatory – "'I'll have to go for a pee', said Audrey, hopping from leg to leg" – it's a piece in which urinary matters are repeatedly thrown into relief. Sharon has developed cystitis; Kath "had a real run of it . . . I'd all spread up the tubes"; Maureen has found a man who "pays her . . . forty quid a week to piss on him", though "*He* doesn't say 'piss'. He says 'wee-wee' ". Slashing out at men continually, Barker reduces them to a very bedraggled bunch: besides Maureen's wet client, there's a gang of retardedly sadistic pranksters, a near-impotent punter who's also a hopeless driver, a bruiser, and a murderous maniac.

Maggie Gee similarly alternates violence and mawkishness. In her story, sentimentality is heavily squashed by sensationalism, the novelettish pounded by the Gothic. Proclaiming the need "to crack existing formal modes", she gets no further than fracturing the odd cliché by typographically pulling it apart. More genuinely innovatory is Julian Barnes's "Emma Bovary's Eyes". Here, the buoyant hookishness that spilled through *Metroland* and *Before She Met Me* is channelled into what is not so much a short story as an exercise in hotted-up literary criticism. Affronted by Enid Starkie's claim that Flaubert was sloppy about detail, the way she condescendingly "spears the novelist with chapter and verse", an admirer of the author parries her points, turning them against her and adding some trenchant satirie thrusts. Sharp and hilarious, this amalgam of dramatic monologue and critical riposte opens up a promising new sub-genre. Christopher Priest takes one that's already established – science fiction of the "alternate world of invented myth" typo – and puts it to eerie use. "The Miraculous Cairn" is one of his "Dream Archipelago" stories (in fact, it shares its central image, that of a trapped hand, with another in the sequence, "Whores"). In it, fear of exclusion and panic at being involved – repeated topics of Priest – powerfully clench together. In his numinous alternate world, the theme of alienation that haunts this anthology is given a literally gripping twist.

How to end it all

Thomas Sutcliffe

T. J. BINDING (Editor)
Firebird 1: Writing Today
336pp. Penguin. £3.95.
0 14 00 6206 8

Firebird 2
284pp. Penguin. £2.95.
0 14 00 6337 4

The short story has become, almost by convention, a pretentious form. Without the length properly to substantiate its claims to our prolonged attention it uses a studied incompleteness to assert that there is more here than meets the eye. James Joyce attacked the neat ending by example in *Dubliners* but had Bloom perform a more ceremonious dispatch in the early pages of Ulysses. In the outhouse after breakfast Bloom reads a short story called "Matcham's Masterstroke" from an old copy of *Tribis*. "Life might be so. It did not move or touch him but it was something quick and neat. . . . He read on, seated calm above his own rising smell. . . . Begins and ends morally. . . . He glanced back through what he had read and while feeling his water flow quietly envied kindly Mr Beaufoy who had written it and received payment of three pounds thirteen and six. . . . He tore away half the prize story sharply and wiped himself with it."

Since then the short story as luminous moment, torn away from the everyday and left with ragged edges, has mostly won out over the quick and the clever. One of the most interesting things about Penguin's annual collections of new writing is that they are generous enough to allow both forms to stand side by side. On the evidence of the first two books, the best writers are restoring a bright and sceptical intelligence to the short story. The cherished fragment has always had its vices: a tendency to preciousness and the requirement of a certain quiescence from the writer. Reading too many can provoke an irritable cynicism because of the air of expectancy that hangs over them, as the author attends mutely, like a child presenting a seashell for approval. The hope they all live by is perfectly expressed in the final lines of Adam Mars-Jones's piece "Structural Anthropology" published in *Firebird 1*. "Just below the surface of story, like the succulent separate threads beneath the skin of a perfectly cooked vegetable-spaghetti, lies the tangled richness of myth." But in that story they close a witty elaboration of the dangers of such interpretation. Mars-Jones's pastiche of a structural analysis of an urban folk tale (an adulterous husband has his hand superglued to his penis by the wife) is both convincing *and* absurd, and as a result sharply judicious about the ease with which something can be made out of nothing. This bravura cleverness is not modest in its dealings with the world, but the frequency with which emptiness is turned up beneath the "surface of story" makes it a delightful relief. Salman Rushdie's beautifully detailed account of one man's collision with Mrs Gandhi's sterilization campaign also has its own point to make about the stories we tell ourselves. Bernard McClaverty's description of a father's death and a dismal act of familial duty comes more directly from the pressed flower school of writing, but the marvellous awkward care with which it is written and the conceit implied in the title, "Life Drawing", preserve it from being archly inconclusive.

Firebird 2 replaces the cocky metropolitan tone with something more deliberately parochial in its approach. It includes stories set in India, Guyana, Egypt, Japan, Ireland and the provinces of England and one result of this broader scope is that the quality is less even than that of the first collection. There are some conventional pleasures. Roy A. K. Heath's description of a Georgetown civil servant, appallingly intimidated by life and his mother, and taking his revenge in anonymous acts of malice, is the funniest story in either collection and scrupulously unsentimental. But again it is writers who resist the obsessively private nature of the short story who make the collection worthwhile. Fay Weldon's "Who?" tackles the volatility of love, as if it were a mathematical problem, proceeding in neat steps through the demonstration to her proof. Her characters Elaine, Howard and Alice are really no more than algebraic ciphers. This isn't entirely likeable, but it guarantees that their reality never threatens the general applicability of the calculation. James Campbell's "Dead Time" opens as a dissertation on dog racing, decoding its signs and constructions but slowly modulating to reveal the suppressed passion of the narrator. Emotion seeps into the story despite his desperate attempt to keep his speech watertight. One of the best stories is Kazuo Ishiguro's "A Family Supper", which opens with a similar blend of the personal and blandly informative. "Fugu is a fish caught off the Pacific shores of Japan. The fish has held a special significance for me ever since my mother died through eating one." Like fugu, the story suggests, family life is a nourishment separated from poison only by the care with which it is prepared, and the fatal mistake can be just as hard to detect before the damage is done. "The proof is, as it were, in the eating."

The best of these writers are in fact essayists, adding the techniques of higher journalism and lower academe to their fictional repertoire. They draw their style from a different generation's *Tatler* and *Spectator*, but it is a genuine wit that is deployed, one which asserts that the facts of life are susceptible to the manipulations of intelligence, not merely there to be reverently recorded.

Criminal proceedings

DORTHY SIMPSON
Puppet for a Corpse
215pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.
0 7181 2207 0

Arnold Pettifer, a well-known general practitioner living in a Kentish market town, is found dead in his bed after having, apparently, taken an overdose and washed it down with a beaker of vintage port. There could hardly, it seems, be a more obvious case of suicide, but a few odd details set Inspector Thanet, Dorothy Simpson's usual policeman, thinking; and his thoughts lead him down a longer and more complicated path to the final solution. A pleasing background, both of Kentish life in general, and Thanet's domesticity in particular, and a neatly constructed plot: though the idea being it is one we have met before.

MICHAEL GILBERT
The Final Throw
240pp. Hoddor & Stoughton. £7.95.
0 340 27895 1

Detective Chief Superintendent Morrissey, head of London's Regional Crime Squad, attempts to bring down a financial empire which is linked to organized crime and drug-smuggling. His operatives in the field are David Rhys Morgan, a fast-talking, hard-drinking Welshman who slides rapidly downhill, and Susan Perronet-Conde, elegant and intelligent, who goes just as rapidly uphill. Michael Gilbert tells a story almost better than anyone else, a quality which is certainly demonstrated in this latest novel, together with the author's usual high professional finish.

T. J. Binyon

Metropolitan margins

Frank Tuohy

RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA
In Search of Love and Beauty
227pp. John Murray. £8.50.
0 7195 4062 3

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's new novel, her first since the prize-winning *Heat and Dust*, is set largely in the United States. For a writer who has made Indian-Western relationships her own particular field, there is an element of risk in moving into new territory – in this case, cosmopolitan New York – which the natives themselves have cultivated with great success and perhaps to the point of exhaustion. The foreign writer must adopt an individual strategy unavailable to the natives: pure fantasy for a non-visitor like Kafka, humorous disdain for an exile like Nabokov. Mrs Prawer Jhabvala has opted for a sort of selective romanticism – selective, because she admits only a small cast of characters: romantic because she seems to exclude anything likely to interfere with the quest proposed in her title. Clearly, love and beauty can easily be pushed out into the margin where modern metropolitan life is concerned. Only by neglecting most of its impact can the novelist devote her attention to her theme.

A group of refugees arrives in New York some time in the early 1930s. Louise, her much older husband, Bruno, and her friend Regi are all rich; they have "brought their money out" and in the case of Bruno and Louise, their furniture as well. The three of them spent their early years in the German town referred to as D–. This usage may only be a bow to the practice found in Russian fiction; on the other hand it is possible that it suppresses a reference to the tragic city of Dresden: in which case it would provide a first grim indication of all the evasions of reality apparently embodied in the action of the novel.

Regi introduces Louise to Leo Kellermann, another refugee, described on the first page as "an Adonis! – An Apollo!" In reality he is a domineering adventurer who soon becomes Louise's lover. Louise and Bruno have one daughter, Meriettn, whose marriage to an alcoholic New Englander has left her with a son Mark, now a successful entrepreneur, and an adopted daughter, Natasha. Meriettn's pursuit of love and beauty involves an elderly Indian musician and several visits to the sub-continent. Mark is preoccupied with the tantrums of various beautiful but unsatisfactory boy-friends; Natasha, who adores Mark, remains on the side-lines, failing to grow up.

With skilfully managed time-shifts, the narrative slides to and fro over a forty-year period, filling in the background to these lives with extensive summaries, and involving a small number of indigenous Americans on the way. Attention is focused most frequently on Leo. In his early days, he looks shamelessly to Regi and Louise for a meal-ticket. His apotheosis in old age is as head of his successful Academy for Potential Development on the Hudson River. Here he seeks what he calls The Point, "the climax of all his experiences and experiments: his theatre group, his psychological encounter group, his quasi-psychological practice, his study of Eastern philosophies . . . his years of residence in California, the drugs he tried, and the love affairs with women, with girls, sometimes ('just for fun') with boys, his mental and physical exercises." Leo, it will be seen, is a charlatan of formidable capacities, but his theatrical performances are rather tame, and the rest of his activities are reported in summary fashion. He engages the attention less closely than the two mink-clad old gorgons, Louise the durable grandmother, and her friend Regi, involved in a well-depicted relationship with a helpful young male homosexual.

Heat and Dust was a novel with a strong and symmetrical structure at times only thinly concealed by the evocation of physical reality. Other stories and film-scripts have contained dialogue which seemed awkwardly expository. External appearances and the spoken word still come low among this writer's priorities. It is difficult to imagine the chic Marietta using a tired catch-phrase like "You've got to be joking". We are left in ignorance of the language that Louise, Regi and their menfolk use among themselves. Presumably it is Garnian, but this goes unremarked by the younger generation.

In Search of Love and Beauty is about evasions of reality and one has to decide how much is the fault of the characters involved, how much belongs to their creator. Physical reality is more or less absent: there is no poison ivy on the mossy banks of Leo's estate where Mark, Natasha and their friends disport themselves. More seriously, concentration on love and beauty has led to neglect of those two equally important abstractions, power and wealth. Those people swim in money, as though it were their natural element. As far as power goes, in the form of politics, it is a relief perhaps to have a novel about refugees which mentions neither the Holocaust nor the Second World War – but hardly a justifiable one.

There is a famous passage in Edith Wharton's memoirs in which she enquires why the characters in *The Golden Bowl* exist in a vacuum, why Henry James had stripped them of all the human fringes we necessarily trail after us through life. He replied: "My dear – I didn't know I had." Like James, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala excels at the confrontation of character. She obviously knows why she has stripped down the human fringes, but I am not sure that her readers will.

Winter Haiku

Hoarfrost on birch-bark:
the houses we lose together:
snowberries in fog

A wind's white pawprints:
the truth is a frozen word,
his prophet the snow

To the teeth of ice
you fold up my breath against
lockjaw, the gnashed skin

An oval partridge
by a roadside, freezing, clings
to the huddled sun

The years, cold water
slipping through our hands: old light
melts before our eyes

Mark Abley

An imitation game

Andrew Hislop

PETER ACKROYD
The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde
185pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 10964 7

In his first novel Peter Ackroyd rewrote *Little Dorrit*. In *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde* he turns his talents to one of the most renowned purveyors and purloiners of words. Superficially, he has written what Wilde did not write – a journal of the last months of his life – but this "historical fiction" tells little of what "happened" during this time. Its main concern is to explain what went before. To do so it rewrites Wilde – employs, mutates, promotes, even multiplates his writings, sayings and actions. Ackroyd has adopted the mask of a man who wrote that "it is only when you give the poet a mask that he can tell you the truth". The result is inevitably two-faced and the truth of *The Last Testament*, though redolent with fact, is a fiction. But this is not inappropriate for a man who wrain many of his aspects (and certainly not always in a pejorative sense) two-faced. Wilde, who could show a feminine as well as a masculine countenance, thought "A man's face is his autobiography. A woman's face is her work of fiction." By adopting the mask of biographical fiction Ackroyd gives us Wilde both ways.

The relationship between an author and his works, between the cultivation through conversation of a "personality" and the art of writing, was a subject which Wilde delighted in and was tormented by: "J'ai mis mon génie dans ma vie; je n'ai mis que mon talent dans mes oeuvres". His trials gave further poignancy to this relationship (Wilde, though able to defend his works when they were speaking for themselves and to transcend them when they appeared to be speaking against himself, condoned himself on occasion, by being unable to control his brilliant conversational retorts). And he probably would not object to Ackroyd's making him continue his exploration of the relationship beyond the grave. ("One's real life is so often the life that one does not lead.") When alive he was always tolerant to the point of generosity of colourful and even pale imitations of his personality. (There were a number of theatrical burlesques of Wilde, the most famous if not the closest imitation being in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*.) And if *Psychic Messages from Oscar Wilde* (1924), edited by Hester Travers Smith, author of *Voices from the Void*, is to be believed, Wilde himself was not one to have his wit curtailed by mere mortality: "Being dead is the most boring experience in life. That is, if one excepts being married or dining with a schoolmaster."

Wilde's writings are well suited to modern literary games of intertextuality, toying with tropes, fabricating fiction, for his masterly manipulation of the fictions of life did not prevent him getting up to a literary trick or two. His most formal and "proper" use of the writings of others was not a modest reworking of Shakespeare (Wilde admitted that he was prone to do that anyway) but the adaptation *in Salome* of the Bible (unfortunately, the Lord Chamberlain's office did not allow the placing of biblical characters on the stage.) But with less lofty subjects he was no respecter of linguistic and literary property: "I appropriate what is already mine for once a thing is published it becomes public property". He also appreciated that such artistic exchange could effect work in more than one direction: "I took the plot of this play [*A Woman of No Importance*] from *The Family Herald*, which took it – wisely I feel – from my novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*." The Oxford Union however, not having his or Harold Bloom's understanding of such creative misunderstandings voted (quite unjustifiably) to refuse Wilde's gift of his *Poems* because "they are for the most part not by their putative father at all but by a number of better-known end more deservedly reputed authors". Whistler not only famously predicted that Wilde would steal one of his phrases, he stopped speaking to him because he did so in "The Decay of Lying". Wilde was not even above deceptively using his own work, duping Lord Alfred Douglas into thinking that an adapted old sonnet had been specially composed for him. It is only appropriate that a letter to Bosie used to blackmail Wilde and defendant by him in court as a "prose poem" should end up as a piece of French verse by Pierre Louys.

Ackroyd, not surprisingly, makes great play with both the imitators of Wilde – he makes much imaginative use of the occasion when Howson, who played a Wildean figure in *Patience*, pretended to be Wilde when they journeyed together in America – and Wilde's appropriative and manipulative literary practices. He continually uses Wilde to justify his use of Wilde, though often it is not exactly Wilde but pseudo-Wilde or just plain Ackroyd who, though clever and witty, at times very witty in a Wildean way, never matches the rhetoric of the original at his most majestic. Numerous references are made by him and the Wildes to such themes as literary property, imitation changing not the impersonator but the impersonated, the meaning of Wilde's life existing in the mind of others, an artist's life being determined by what he forgets not what he remembers, borrowing other voices, mastering masks, art and life finding their highest expression in parody, etc. We are shown Wilde dipping into Landor's *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen* and with reference to his own exercise in speculative biography, *The Portrait of Mr WH* (which argued that Shakespeare's sonnets were addressed to a boy actor), he boldly declares "It was of no concern to me if the facts were accurate or inaccurate: I discerned a truth which was larger than that of biography and history." He even records in his journal his friends remarking on the inaccuracy of his journal.

The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde is, without doubt, a remarkable achievement. What is less certain is what it has achieved. Ackroyd has played a clever but precarious game. The reader is required to have a certain knowledge to know that the game is being played (and that Ackroyd's suggestion, for instance, that Wilde's mother told him during his trials that he was illegitimate is a truth larger than history). Too much knowledge, however, threatens the artifice of the novel's authority. The Wildean scholar who knows every source, and marks every diversion from the "accepted" truth will see exactly where Ackroyd lurks behind the mask. And because Ackroyd has chosen a medium in which it is difficult to find him, the discovery of his presence destroys his subject – much more so than if he were an actor obviously playing Wilde. The audience accept an actor as a subject; they mask him because it is obvious that he is another, Ackroyd's success at increasing his readers will drive them to other writings which will unmask him and make his efforts redundant. Perhaps in his next novel he will use his many talents to show more of himself. But then if Wilde's opinion that "Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation" is correct, he might well wish to rewrite himself.

A fabulous fortune

T. J. Binyon

STEPHEN VIZINCZEY
An Innocent Millionaire
388pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.
0 241 10929 9

Mark Niven, the innocent millionaire of the title and the hero of Stephen Vizinczey's first novel for some twenty years, a book which was twelve years in the writing, is the son of an unsuccessful American actor whose career has been blighted by the existence of a better-known English actor with the same surname. On a day trip to Toledo – the Nivens are living in Spain at the time – to celebrate Mark's fourteenth birthday, his parents tell him that they are about to separate, and his father gives him a Spanish book about sunken treasure. One chapter of this work concerns the Flora, a 230-ton ship which went down off the northwestern Bahamas carrying 29,267 diamonds, rubies, emeralds and amethysts, 11,254 pearls, 145,050 gold doubloons, 17 tons of gold bullion and a host of minor treasures. Over the next years the wreck becomes an obsession with Mark; he searches libraries and archives throughout Europe for clues as to its position. Finally he makes it to the Bahamas, has an affair with the wife of a chemical millionaire (herself a millionairess in her own right), finds the Flora and gets entangled with a crooked art dealer and a host of shyster lawyers: Vizinczey makes no secret of his belief that no man practising law, no matter how prestigious his firm, can ever be honest.

However, it is practically impossible to summon up any sympathy for Mark in his travails after learning, as early as page 35, that when visiting libraries he carries with him a razor-blade in order to cut out from books and manuscripts any passages that may be of interest to him: after reading this one can only wish him a far more rapid and stickier end than any the complacent author might have in store for him.

In its bulk and in some of its thematic preoccupations this novel comes close to the Harold Robbins end of the market, but differs from it in not having enough characters, enough plot, enough violence, or even – strangely for a work from the pen of the author of *In Praise of Older Women* – enough sex. Indeed, closer inspection reveals that Mark's world exists at one remove even from fictional reality. Even more worryingly, many of the sections appear to bear symbolic or even allegorical significance, while the narrative is positively rife with aphoristic utterance, often portentously italicized. In other words, what one had instinctively suspected from the beginning is, unfortunately, true: the novel is a morality, a fable; Voltaire brought up to date and blown up big enough to fill a hoarding the size of Times Square.

Silence, Exile and Cunning: the Fiction of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (325pp. Sangam Books, 31 Manchester Square, London W1M 3PB. £9.50. 0 86131 379 8) by Yasmin Gooneratne contains an introductory chapter on the novelist's life and chapters on each of her novels (eight in all).

The central conceit, expressed by the contradiction of this title, is neatly iconoclastic, and the author had pleasure in working out its various ramifications through Mark's experiences of those of Marianne, his millionairess mistress. Most of the author's apophthegms are of the same type: turn a conventional attitude upside-down to obtain a new view of life. Self-interest or greed is the key to human behaviour, and the lawyer is thus seen as the paradigm of social man. There can be no doubt that the author gets and gives a good deal of amusement out of this kind of thing, as when the sullen looks of the girls parading semi-nude up and down the Croisette during the Cannes film festival are attributed to the realization that "there were just not enough ugly rich men in the world".

Only a gullible or guileless reader is likely to find the ideas shockingly new, titillatingly daring, or deeply revelatory of the basic depravity of man. Like Voltaire, Vizinczey tells a good story which slips easily down the throat; but, unlike *Candide*, *An Innocent Millionaire* proves to be cupeptic mash throughout.

commentary

Bitches and baboons

David Nokes

HOWARD BARKER
Victory
Royal Court Theatre

Howard Barker's latest play *Victory* belongs to that new school of whodunits in which it is always the banker, not the butler, who did it. Subtitled "Choices in Reaction", the play is a gaudy mock-historical romp through the aftermath of England's seventeenth-century counter-revolution. At the centre of the play is Bradshaw (Julie Covington), widow of the former President of the Council of regicides, whose quest is to gather together the exhumed and gibbeted relics of her husband's body from the various spikes where they hang on public display. An unsentimental Antigone, she goes about this ritual duty with little apparent respect or sympathy for the husband whose posthumous humiliation by the Royalists was prefigured by his own moral exhibitionism. "Forever exhibiting his mind, was ever a mind hung out so much in public, dirty thing it was, a great monster of a mind so flashed and brazenly dangled?" Her contempt for the pious evangelism of the puritan revolutionaries is matched by Charles's ridicule of his dead father as "a saint as well as a sod. A most peculiar combination." In this post-Restoration world there are no more ideals; the old loyalties and oppositions are dead and God has been replaced by the banker, Hambro. In one glorious theatrical moment the crude old Falstaffian cavalier Ball (Kenny Ireland) makes a last ditch effort to restore old love to England by stabbing the cold fish Hambro (David Lyon) in the back, while yelling to Charles "Be a King. Oh come on, be a fucking monarchist!" But the result is only silence and embarrassment. In this new Hobbesian world lewdness has replaced lust; ideology is reduced to street theatre and monarchs are merely front-men "to tickle crowds for bankers".

As a show the play is crude, hectic and uneven, veering anachronistically from one idiom to another with more concern for modern analogies than for historical authenticity. The young disillusioned levellers are presented as a kind of football hooligans, chanting "we was the champions". Defacing church monuments gave then the same kind of buzz as smashing shop-window or spraying graffiti. Yet Barker cannot entirely deny himself the rhythms and resources of a period language for his more rhetorical or sententious moments. The resulting pastiche should be a disastrous mish-mash, yet curiously the effect is totally convincing. In fact it is its language, a racy unpunctuated riot of contrasting verbal styles, rich in metaphor, and full of idiomatic collisions, that gives the play its exuberant energy, though I could have wished that some of the repetitive expletives had been deleted. Theatrically, too, the play is deliberately disjointed, with many scenes functioning like review sketches. Nigel Terry over-acts the merry monarch or "mad shagman" with more than a hint of Basil Fawlty in his fruity tones and funny walk. The closing scene of Act One in the vaults of the Bank of England is like a *Goon Show* parody of a Northern sit-com, with Stan (Kenny Ireland) who bears an uncanny resemblance to Ollie, worrying about being late home to the wife, and Frank (Hugh Ross) rolling to and fro on a trolley of gold bars that represent his own bits of England.

In the second act this loose structure disintegrates further; the parodies lose their energy, and we are left to contemplate a number of unconvincing symbols. The blind Milton (Nigel Terry) is brought on to blame the failure of the revolution on "Shit and God" and to warn future revolutionaries that "next time there must be no finish, or we shall slap one another in the gardens of our enemies". In the final sentimental scene Bradshaw has not only gathered together all the bits of her dead husband, but also carries a newborn baby at her breast. In addition, her unbowed puritan daughter Cropper (Eleanor David) declares that she has been secretly learning Latin in order to read and translate the writings of her father. The younger generation is keeping the faith alive in the night, smuggling the truth across the borders of history. *La lutte continue.*

But this "optimistic" conclusion sits rather uneasily at the end of the play in which the ironic knowingness of the echoes and the crude exaggeration of the caricatures only succeed because they assume and create a shared disbelief in ideological symbols. Barker's satiric reduction of political iconography to a kind of strip cartoon in which Charles is a blue-bummed baboon and Bradshaw a bitch on all fours, is a theatrical triumph, and the Joint Stock company, under Danny Boyle's direction, are to be congratulated on the vigour and flexibility of this production. But when Barker tries to have it both ways and leave us with this heart-warming revelation that the revolutionary soul of Bradshaw goes marching on, the imagery seems trite, and he falls into the trap created by his own iconoclastic wit.

The text of Howard Barker's *Victory, Choices in Reaction* is published by John Calder / Riverrun (63pp. £3.95. 0 7145 3986 4). William Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life* will be published as an RSC Playtext on May 12 (46pp. Methuen. £1.95. 0 413 53300 X).

Semi-detached

Martin Dodsworth

SHAKESPEARE
Julius Caesar
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

The bones of the new Stratford *Julius Caesar* are idly, indecisively Brechtian. Farrah's design for the first half of the play consists of a wall of enormous marble cubes ranged one on top of the other from floor to ceiling at the back of the stage. The effect is to belittle the actors; there can be no great men in this Rome. The conspirators are petty intriguers, lucky with what success does come their way; Caesar is vain and complacent, his heart overflowing with a merely bourgeois affection.

He has aspirations to greatness. The Lupercalia are organized as a show in which the main act is Caesar's ceremonious distribution of the leather thongs to the runners; on stage he is given simpering applause. At the Capitol Caesar's speech and assassination are televised and relayed simultaneously on a screen behind him. Since the image, in life and death, is twenty times life-size, the man is diminished by the claims to stature implicit in his publicity machine. The same procedure is used when Brutus and Mark Antony make their orations to the people of Rome.

It is an ambiguous device: Mark Antony's speech visibly and audibly works upon the mob, so that we cannot feel that *he* is made to look small by the enormous image behind him. What seems at first intended as a device to alienate us from the Roman statesmen becomes in his case mere trickery. The sense of purpose in the production leaks away. Only a consistent and clearly motivated practice of detachment could have saved this *Julius Caesar* from disaster; it is lacking.

Take, for example, Caesar's progress to the Capitol at the opening of the third act. Clad in scarlet and gold, he and his companions form a line from one side of the stage to the other and advance majestically towards the audience while the organ of Coventry Cathedral blares out in triumphant tones. It is an image from *The Will to Power*, or might be. Riefenstahl's film often used to be cited as an example of the power of the image to persuade the feelings against all sense: even good anti-fascists were said to be moved by it. Well, maybe. Certainly at Stratford the image strikes one as *intended* to move and excite, as a triumph over the audience to which only submission is possible; such an effect frustrates the Brechtian vision which the stage at other times seems to present. The vulgarities of music and design (largely crimson, gold and silver in the first half of the production and very much in the spirit of the Nuremberg rallies) might be intended as a commentary on imperial pretension – do we not have a quotation from Marx in the place of honour in the programme? – but first and foremost they strike one as simply vulgar.

There is a complete change of décor for the second half of the play. We are now in *Mother Courage* country, shaggy black carpet underfoot, darkness at the back of the stage, grappling nets hanging from above, and soon, among the half-Roman, half-Hundred Years War military, Mother Courage's cart itself appears, only here it has to serve largely as the body of Brutus's tent. After the pretensions of the first half, men are cut down to size on the battlefield. The idea is again perceptible, but hardly registered where it matters, in the gut. There is music everywhere in this production, and it is all pure MGM. When Cassius arrives at Brutus' tent, the trumpets sound as though it were a state banquet for Ronald Reagan: "Hark! he is arriv'd". Earlier on, while Caesar hummed and hawed about going to the Capitol, we were even treated to the *plim-pam-pom* routine of drum-beats for tension. The obtrusiveness and consistent awfulness of the music are a major factor in blunting the edge of Ron Daniels's already infirm purpose. Its omnipresence suggests a late attempt to plaster over cracks in the design.

The actors do not have much chance in all this. Their main task seems to have been a negative one – not on any account to suggest "greatness". This suits Joseph O'Conor well as Caesar: he plays him as a man of authority, but also as one who is used to the trials of a senior executive – heart-trouble, failing hearing and a wife who thinks he puts too much time in at the office. Emrys James has a harder time of it as Cassius, not just because he obviously lacks the lean and hungry look with which Shakespeare endows him. He is too small, tired and envious to exercise any plausible power over Brutus in the second scene. Deprived of the greatness of his ambition, James cannot do very much with what is left him, excellent actor though he is. The case of Peter McEnery's Brutus is even worse. Given no stature as man of virtue or thinker, it becomes hard to see why he should be so eagerly wished for in the conspiracy, but all too plain why he so often gives his lines false emphasis – if he got them right he would fly in the face of his director's wishes. Only the dispute with Portia, played by Gemma Jones as a hysterical vixen with Roman women's rights on her mind, allows him to show his ability. By contrast, Mark Antony's lines are given all the emphasis possible by David Schofield; if the concept is that of the politician as ham actor, it is a trifle overdone.

Shakespeare's play is about the rivalry of intimates – that is the force of Caesar's "*Et tu, Brute*" – and it is about the paradox of ambition that drives men from the peace of home to kill and be killed in the arena of public life. Belittling the players, Ron Daniels's production also belittles the play, for it achieves intimacy neither among the actors nor with the audience.

Hearts of gold

David Montrose

WILLIAM SAROYAN
The Time of Your Life
The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

First performed in 1939, William Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life*, now revived by the RSC, offers an enjoyable combination of vaudeville and sub-Emersonian philosophy. The scene is Nick's Pacific Street Saloon, Restaurant, and Entertainment Palace: a honky-tonk on the San Francisco waterfront, evoked with flyblown authenticity by Bob Crowley's set. A variety bill in the form of everyday life – comic duologues, music and dancing, tall tales, romantic melodrama – is the vehicle for a parable embodying the code advocated in Saroyan's epigraph, which reads like Emerson rewritten in the style of "Desiderata":

> In the time of your life, live – so that in that good time there shall be no ugliness or death for yourself or for any life your life touches. Seek goodness everywhere . . . bring it out of its hiding-place and let it be free . . . Place in matter and flesh the least of all values . . .

In a play where hearts of gold abound, the most golden belong to Nick, the saloon's proprietor, and Joe, a wealthy lush, who come nearest to enacting Saroyan's tenets. Each lends a hand to deserving cases who cross his path. Ultimately, both men have the power to advance the play's profusion of American dreamers in the direction of their ideal lives. But while Nick gives breaks to an eager young hoofer, Harry, and to Wesley, a black pianist, Joe's power remains latent. His lazy inclination is always to disburse money on temporary solutions rather than trouble with effecting long-term changes. As an act of kindness, Joe buys all a newsboy's unsold papers, but Nick promises the boy work as a singer. Only in the final act does Joe realize his potential and, in so doing, perceive possibility in his shapeless life. He lands a job for Tom – "his admirer, disciple, errand boy, stooge and friend" – liberating him to marry, after a whirlwind romance, Kitty Duval, a beautiful girl driven by poverty into prostitution.

The booky-tonk is a tolerant haven where the human virtues can flourish. Assorted "little and unknown" people pass through, displaying "their natural instinct to live gracefully and decently". News from outside provides an intermittent counterpoint – war in Europe, a violent strike on the waterfront – but evil enters the saloon itself only in the person of Blick, bullying head of the local vice squad, dirty-minded guardian of public morals. Events climax with his come-uppance: shot, offstage, by Kit Carson, a yarn-spinning old-timer. So all ends happily. Blick dead; Tom and Kitty off to be married; Joe, it is implied, shaken out of his passivity, ready to quit the honky-tonk for the world of action.

Given the pervasive sentimentality and the implausibility of the major plot developments, it is just as well that Saroyan's would-be profundities have always played second fiddle to his humour, which also overshadows sundry technical shortcomings. For performers, *The Time of Your Life* is a demanding play. Most of the large cast spend long periods onstage engaged in the hard work of doing nothing or of reacting to others' lines. And as a rule characterization is sketchy. Two roles are particularly thankless: Zoe Wanamaker has scant opportunity to establish Kitty's "angry purity", Martin Milman even less to convey the hatefulness of Blick. Doubly unfortunate, they are deprived of the comic dialogue – which has held up wonderfully – that compensates other characters. John Catar, playing Kit Carson, is the chief beneficiary, delivering scene-stealing monologues clearly based on the mumbling surrealism W. C. Fields: "I don't suppose you ever fell in love with a midget weighing thirty-nine pounds? . . . Will I ever get over that amazon of small proportions?" John Thaw comes a close second, raping out Nick's lines like a grouchy New York cab-driver, while Miles Anderson, as the love-struck Dudley R. Bostwick, makes good use of his infrequent spells at the centre of attention. Visual humour is mainly contributed by Henry Goodman, who, as Harry, brings so expressive suppleness to Ann Emery's choreography.

The only significant defect attributable to Howard Davies's production itself, rather than to the author, derives from what looks like an attempt to increase the preponderance of the comic elements. In particular, the pivotal relationship between Joe and Tom has turned into a straightforward cross-talk routine. Daniel Massey flattens out Joe's complexities, while Paul Greenwood's Tom is a far smarter cookie than Saroyan's innocent, trusting original, patiently humouring his master's whims instead of bemusedly obeying. Extra laughs are garnered, but at the cost of simplifying the rounded character (Joe) and of creating inconsistency between interpretation and script: Tom's manner fits neither his subservient behaviour nor his simple-hearted devotion to Kitty. The result is to make the work's insubstantial centre still more apparent. But, of course, audiences usually scorn such considerations provided the laughs keep on coming. And here they certainly do.

commentary

Rooms with views

Jonathan Keates

The Henry Cole Wing
Victoria and Albert Museum

There was a time not so very long ago when it seemed as if the Victoria and Albert Museum was about to admit defeat, crushed beneath the dead weight of immortal junk. The Cast Courts were suddenly sealed off, the English Primary galleries were blotted from view, the seats were removed from the Cartoon Hall; presumably with some Victorian or Alberbine idea that Raphael must be admired either standing or kneeling, and the wonderful Grill Room with its improving enamelled terracotta frieze and full-length mirrors was perpetually turned to the self-admiring. In the Costume Court the cases stood dismally empty, and the Indian paintings were made unapproachable with a boiscord carpet had been laid before them, a measure justified, no doubt, by the fact that the jute strings used in its manufacture came from Bengal but otherwise wholly meritorious.

Wavering faith in the régime of Sir Roy Strong, however, despite such options as the dreadful Habitat Boiler-house, is for the time being renewed by what has gone on across the garden in Francis Fowke's pink and yellow Lombardic-Renaissance wing. Consecrated to the spirit of Sir Henry Cole, whose pioneering initiative in the maintenance of nineteenth-century design standards is commemorated in an embarrassed little display cabinet along a basement corridor smelling like a stable, the new galleries both vindicate the intriguing singularity of the Victoria and Albert and underline those essential flaws in its lofty inclusiveness of conception which end in a sense of despair at the very notion of what a museum is.

The compactness of the new wing is immediately attractive. By a lucky accident the lifts broke down on its first open day (as did the mechanical drink dispenser on the top floor) with the result that visitors were forced up the narrow side stair whose successive turns disclose a weird omnium museum of domes and skylights with, at its climax, an extraordinary panoramic vista towards the distant towers and ridges of north London. Such a prospect marries happily with the Costabile collection, lodged in these remoteness on level six with enough room at last for their essential values of distance and volume to be properly appreciable.

Views remain dominant two floors down (level five carries the new Print Room) where Gainsborough's glass masterpieces, formerly displayed flat to the textile cabinets opposite are full of Jacobite garters, now have their glowing Prussian blue and crimson set off by pools of darkness. Beside them, on its own observation plinth, Caracciolo's 1824 diorama of Rome forlornly recalls that ruinous rusticity lost forever once post-Risorgimento Italian aggrandizement demanded a capital. Doors from here give onto the Escher-like Great North Staircase, suggestively gloomy and devoid of life, hung with a jumble of unassorted prints (including a visible attempt by Horace Walpole to give himself a respectable pedigree) and, to complete the surreal illusion, apparently inaccessible from top or bottom.

Long may it continue thus. Such entertainments and surprises are part of the Victoria and Albert's unending pleasure. If, in the thickly carpeted British Art section on level two, with its bottom-punishing garden seats (Constable has bouncy brown sofas) it is as impossible as it ever was downstairs to look closely at the more flatulent excursions of Benjamin West and William Mulready (the directorate invokes Ruskin in support of its quaint loyalty to glazing) we can enjoy the case of tiny landscape panels (West's are no bigger than matchboxes) which shows each of them on a refreshing vacation from high-mindedness. Much of this, apart from a gem or two among the Tonides pictures on level four, is simply dross fit for art historians. The authentic visual delights, lovingly held out by the third floor galleries, lie in the array of British watercolours, from the lakes, waterfalls and volcanoes of Grand Tourists like Towne and the Cozenses to a grey Cotman capriccio in which a Paestum temple slowly submerges in a stormy sea. Randolph Caldecott's sketches of Brighton ladies show up vibrantly, against the rebarbative precision of a Birket Foster *voyage*, and the cases of sketchbooks – Larionov strangely sober beside jezzy Goncharova, a nude equestrienne in a hat by Orpen, Eric Forbes-Robertson distilling crepuscular Edwardian lyricism – are glorious booty for enthusiasts.

Beside this the long-promised photography display seems a modest affair, enlivened though it currently is by the twentieth-century *Personal Choice* of Sir Roy Strong and his friends. Best among these are two silent Atgeis of a bed and a boat, the Paul Strand of a ferocious young Gaul from Charente and David Bailey's study of Jean Shrimpton, a scowling isosceles triangle based on a pair of splayed feet like immense ploughshares.

Huddled together in a corner of the gallery the photographs cry out, like so much else in the museum, for adequate space, a problem the new wing can never have hoped to solve. That this and the lighting and the labelling and the design are not all plumb right matters little in comparison with that ideal sense of a personal domain, detached almost wholly from the main museum, communicated at once to the exploring visitor. Where the Boiler-house is merely meretricous, the Henry Cole Wing betrays a touching confidence in our continuing willingness to enjoy.

Rembrandt's etching of Jon Uyenbogaert, Preacher of the Remonstrants, an item in Christie's sale of prints on April 21.

Pen knifing

Peter Kemp

Graham Greene – *I Accuse*
BBC 2

Graham Greene – I Accuse was publicized as a coup: at last, the author was breaking his "lifelong rule never to appear on television". This was not quite accurate – Greene has appeared briefly on Hungarian television; and, though unseen, contributed an informative soundtrack to an *Omnibus* programme about his work. Still, the event was enough of a rarity to justify expectancy – which it then rather dashed.

One disadvantage was the fractured format: bits of interview scattered among rather piecemeal summary of Greene's charges – in his pamphlet, *J'Accuse* – of corruption on the Côte d'Azur. A further handicap was the lumbering nature of the interviewers, stopped in their tracks by Greene's mention of even so well-documented a fact as his dread of boredom. "Isn't boredom sometimes . . . relaxing?" one of them asked him bemusedly. Not for Greene, the most cursory glance at his autobiographical writings would have made clear. *A Sort of Life* catalogues with relish his adolescent attempts to fend off the horrors of apathy: hacking his leg with a penknife, drinking hypo in the dark room, draining a bottle of belladonna drops, munching a bunch of deadly nightshade, downing twenty aspirins then plunging into a swimming-pool, playing Russian roulette. *Ways of Escape*, Greene's later book of memoirs, details his subsequent, more sophisticated methods of combatting boredom: writing and travel. With him, these often overlap, and can incorporate another factor – political involvement. Though this programme suggested otherwise, *J'Accuse* isn't the first time Greene has used his pen to prod public figures. *The Comedians* was written to needle Papa Doc – and succeeded: "Le livre n'est pas bien écrit", he declared (it was also reviewed unfavourably by the Haiti Department of Foreign Affairs in a noteworthy document, "Graham Greene démasqué finally exposed"). Greene about Paraguay in *The Honorary Consul* touched General Stroessner on the raw. Where *J'Accuse* differs from the earlier books is in claiming to be non-fictional – though there are still striking affinities with some of the novels: Greene has observed how life in Nice, with its feuding gangs, seems to be imitating *Brighton Rock*.

Legal qualms were perhaps responsible for the programme's rather shaky handling of Greene's indictments in *J'Accuse* (the film ended with the news that he'd just been fined £2,700 for libel). But, certainly, it didn't examine the pamphlet's case fully. Where the film served a very useful function was in allowing those accused to appear for themselves. Their modes of explanation proved illuminating. Daniel Guy, the pamphlet's main target, argued that, by going to law rather than having "the matter . . . settled quite differently", he proved he had no criminal connections. Mayor Médecin, filmed amid the polished parquet and varnished portraits of the Civic Reception Rooms, glossed over corpses found in Nice as imports from Marseilles or the by-products of "returning Algerians". Announcing that you could never trust novelists, he concurred with Papa Doc in finding Greene "not a particularly good writer".

Daniel Guy's opinion of Greene's literary standing didn't emerge. But he showed a serious misunderstanding of the novelist in suggesting that what motivated his crusade against the *milieu* and its minions was fear of loneliness. As Greene indicated, it would be hard to find a more tragic isolation – generally the real goal of Greene's journeyings – is something he greatly values. It is necessary for his writing and widespread within it. Solitaries, outsiders, expatriates throng his fiction; intellectual and emotional isolation is taken as a basic fact of life. Not feeling integrated into a group is second nature to Greene: as he has frequently pointed out, it was among his earliest, most formative experiences. Attending a school where his father was headmaster, he found himself torn between commitment to the family and to his contemporaries: "Quisling's son". Repeated crossing of a clear dividing-line between home and school stamped his responses for life – giving him among other things, a lasting fascination with what he often sums up in a favourite phrase from Browning as "the dangerous edge of things". This programme – juxtaposing sunny shots of riviera romping with Greene's allegations about the darker side of life in Nice – demonstrated that he's still patrolling this shadowy sector with an undiminished energy.

Seventy-five years on: J. T. Delane

TLS of April 16, 1908 carried the following review of Arthur Irwin Dasent's John Thadeus Delane, Editor of *The Times*: His Life and Correspondence:

> He became Editor in 1841, when the *Times* under the second John Walter and Barnes, had achieved a great position, and in 1848 we find him in private correspondence with Lord Aberdeen, Sir Charles Wood, the Greenhills, and soon afterwards with the Clarendon, Lord Palmerston, and Disraeli . . . It is remarkable that it seems to have commanded the confidence of all alike, whatever their party views or connexions may have been. Besides this he had his hand on the public pulse through the correspondence which reached the press; and the whole became formed and vivid image in his mind. He is described by a correspondent in Vienna as the best informed man in England, and perhaps in Europe. All forms of opinion gravitated naturally towards him, and his mind was independent enough to sift and balance it. He was rarely, if ever, led away by one clique of opinion, and the saying might well be applied to him that "he saw life whole" . . . The letters of Lord Torrington in these volumes afford, perhaps, the most striking illustration of his power in this respect. They contain the most frank revelations of the feelings of the Court, and are evidently written not as mere interesting gossip, but as materials for the guidance of a man on whom the writer places absolute reliance. It would seem from them that Delane was the means of conveying to the Queen, from time to time, in a singularly effective manner, the feeling of the country as to her retirement from public life, and in such delicate matters as the relations between the Prussian and Danish Courts at the time of the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty.

American notes

Christopher Hitchens

Norman Mailer has stayed away from fiction for over ten years. He would probably describe his imminent return to it as a "comeback". Certainly his fondness for pugilistic metaphors remains as great as ever. *Ancient Evenings*, the first volume of his projected trilogy set in Pharaonic society, which is due out in May, even sounds like a session of bleary reminiscence with Jake La Motta. And, as Mailer himself puts it in a forthcoming interview with *Harvard Magazine*:

> By the time you reach your sixties, you feel as if you're in the twelfth round and you're battered . . . . It may be that part of remaining a writer is to *ring* yourself mere and more with serious protections.

Arguably. But, as the interview proceeds, Mailer deffs the gumshield and gloves and finds himself conceding the eddest points. He tells the questioner (his student and admirer Robert Begiebing) that:

> I'm a great believer in karma. I do believe that we're not here just one time, and I don't have any highly-organized theology behind that – It's just e pessing conviction that keeps returning. Karma tends to make mere sense than a world conceived without it, because when you think of the incredible elaborations that go inte any one human being, it does seem wasteful of the cosmos to send us out just once to learn all those things, and then molder forever in the weeds.

So, the two-fisted Mailer has taken refuge in psychobabble. He says, unfalsifinbly, that "I don't think it's an eccident that I'm a novelist". On the same foeting is his opinion that "probably a social evening in Egypt in that period three thousand years ago was as interesting as an evening in New York today". Which, when one recalls some of Mailer's New York evenings, is as lame a remark as one could meet with in a day's journey. Only once does a flash of the old fighter show itself. That's when he avers, with apparent seriousness, that:

> Movie stars fascinate me. Their lives are so unlike anyone else's. You could almost postulate they come from another planet. The way of life of the movie star speaks of another order of existence.

Tautology aside, Fitzgerald and Hemingway could hardly have put it more pithily.

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Americans are, rightly, very sensitive to the charge of "cultural imperialism". They like to deprecate *Dallas* themselves, and they like to deplore the global spread of Hellywood values and MacDonald's hamburgers. But, if one can risk the generalizatien, they don't relish any sneering at these artefacts when it comes from ether people. Their response on such occasions is akin to that of the British traveller, who will inveigh against Princess Margaret when among friends, but who bristles like a porpentine shnuld nn outsider impugn the Royal Family in the slightcst. The other day, I noticed the excellent Ray Sokolov, cultural commissar at the *Wall Street Journal*, danounce European anti-American *snobisme* as "the anti-semitism of the Left". I wrote, but did not post, a letter to him peinting out that he thinks the Left is anti-semltie anyway.

Now, Ariel Dorfman has taken a deep breath end exhaled with *The Empire's Old Clothes: Whor the Lone Ranger, Babo and Other Innocent Heroes Do To Our Minds*. As a Chilenn exlle, Dorfman has a relationship of friendly but guarded co-existence with the United States. He's enthralled by Donald Duck, enchanted by Tonto and very much taken with Superman. However, a stern sense of the fitness of things compels him to decode the apparently innocuous and challenge the ideas and images which he thinks are being transmitted. I think he reads too much into Babar the Elephant, but he's written a very witty and clever chapter on the *Reader's Digest*. Here, Derfman believes, is the *summa* of Middle American wisdom. Its very title – in Spanish it is published as *Selecciones* – implies e comprehensive, universal access of knowledge, a hoard of omniscience from which the guardians have judiciously chosen the best. How touching to be reminded that the April 1980 issue contained two pieces ("Manhattan: Neurotic and Fascinnting" and "Chine goes Shopping") which indulged the *RD's* need to make personalities out of complex entities. How amazing to learn of the Chicago physician who prescribed the aggressive common sense of the *Digest* to patients suffering from "worry, fear or hypochondria". How nice te be reminded that it is published, with its wendrously emollient message, from Pleasantville. In fact, everything about the *RD* is rather jolly until you remember that it is, by his own account, the President's favourite reading.

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There isn't what yeu might call a cult of the amsteur in Amenca. The word "professional" is a compliment in all of its declenaions. But there are some salient exceptions. One of them la I. F. Stone, who haa occupied his retirement from jeurnalsim in the study of classical Greek, teaching himself the language and poring over the canenical texts as he once scrutinized the blue books and white papers of Washington skulduggery. Over the last few weeks huge audiences have assembled in New York and in Georgetown to hear his re-working of the trial of Socrates. Next month, he's delivering the three talks at Harvard. Briefly, Stona has imported ell the brusque iconeclasm ot his previeus career to the excrcise of proving that Plato was a sell-out. He argues that Socrates was unfairly tried and wrongly executed, but that ha had heen asking for it ever since the aristocrats were expelled to Eleusis. More, he believes that Socrates would net have survived anyef the hierarchic Utopias proposed by his disciple (who never really pleaded e strong defience of the old man). A sample of the Stone analysis reads like this:

> Socrates called himself "the gadfly of Athens". But what the hell kind ef a gadfly was he when he never spoke up against slavery, or against the Sicilian expedition?

It's never been disputed that Plato and Socrates were inclined to look down upen the many-headed, and the late R. H. S. Crossman wrote famously of Plato that he was an ancestor of fascism. But Stone has gone one better by suggesting the analogy of American city politics as well as the ene of modern totalitarianism.

Professional classicists have reacted with a mixture of amusement, anger and disdoin. Charles Griswold commented from Howard University that

> Mr Stone's recent lectures reminded me that the philosophic issues raised by Plato can be exciting to large groups of non-specialists. It also reminds me of the soundness of Plato's pessimism about the pessibility ef conveying the truth to large groups ef one's fellow citizens.

Others have echoed his (Griswold's) peint that there *is* an antithesis. In Plato, between the philesopher and the tyrent. Will popularization lead to enlightenment?

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New Yorkers are trying te get used to a new poster, often in the shape of a full-page newspaper advertisement. A striking figure, apparently an attempt te harmonize Boadicea with the Statue of Liberty, sperts a badge reading "I love New York." For the next mentb, the city is to be regaled with a succession of British cultural events, under the general title of *Britain Salutes New York*. The festival is to mark the bicentenary of British recognition of American independence – which in Georgian terms took the surprisingly quick time of seven years. It was from New York that the British finally departed and the city was for e brief time the capital of the United States – as, in everything but pelitics, it still is.

The patrons are the Prince of Wales and the First Lady, with the help of the British Council and an amorphous entity going by the name of the "Angle-American business community". The strongest suit appears to be fine arts, with exhibitions of Constable and Henry Moore at the Metropolitan Museum, a loan from the Royal Academy to the National Acedemy of Art and the Queen's Holbeins at the Pierpont Morgan Library. Her Majesty has also been pleased to lend her Fabergé Collection, which will be on view at the Cooper Hewitt Museum. There's going to be a showing of Stanley Spencer, whe is almost unknown in America, and ef the paintings of Sir Winston Churchill, who is well-known but not as a painter. Other "fringe" events seem designed to add to the curious chemistry of Anglophilia here – there's to be a Chelses Flower Show, an Oxford and Cambridge boat race; and an effort was even made to import the Grimetberpe Colliery Band. A great laundering of tuxedos is in progress, with evenings of the London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Shakespeare Company in prospect. Academics and historians are holding a symposium en Anglo-American relations, and te this Paul Channon, Minister of the Arts, enquired if he might come. One venerable professor responded graciously te this by saying, "Chips's son is *always* welcome."

Among this week's contributors

SIR DARRELL BATES's most recent book, *The Abyssinian Difficulty*, was published in 1980.

T. J. BINYON's crime novel, *Swan Song*, was published last yenr.

JAMES BOOTH is the author of *Writers and Politics in Nigeria*, 1981.

SARAH BRADFORD's *Disraeli* was published in 1982.

J. A. BURROW is the mthor of *Medieval Writers and Their Work*, 1982.

ERIK DE MAUNY was the BBC Moscow Correspondent from 1963 to 1966, and 1972 to 1974.

MARTIN DODSWORTH is the editor of *English*.

J. D. FAGE is Professor of African History at the University of Birmingham.

ROY FOSTER's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life* was published in 1981.

GEOFFREY GRIGSON's most recent book, *Freedom of the Parish*, was published last year.

CHRISTOPHER HAIGH's books include *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire*, 1975.

JOSÉ HARRIS is a Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford, and the author of *William Beveridge: A Biography*, 1977.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS is Washington Correspondent for *The Nation*.

N. M. HORSFALL is a lecturer in Greek and Latin at University College London.

MICHAEL HOWARD is a Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford.

DENIS JUDD is the author of *Lord Reading*, 1982.

JONATHAN KEATES teaches English at the City of London School.

PETER KEMP's *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape* was published earlier this year.

ANGELA LEIGHTON is a lecturer in the English Department of the University of Hull. Her *Shelley and the Sublime* will be published next year.

P. S. LEWIS is the author of *Later Medieval France: the Polity*, 1968.

ALAN MACKAY is a lecturer in Crystallography at Birkbeck College, London.

WILLIAM MANN is the author of *Richard Strauss, A Critical Study of the Operas*, 1964.

RUTH MCCURRY is Joint Editor of the quarterly magazine *Christian*.

DAVID NOKES is a lecturer in English at King's College London.

RAGHONO O'HANLON has contributed essays to *The Dorwinian Heritage: A Centennial Retrospect*, to be published thia year.

RAYMOND PLANT is Professor of Politics at the University of Southampton. A revised and extended version of his *Hegel*, 1973, is to be published later this year.

JOHN SKORUPSKI's *Symbol and Theory*, 1976, appeared in paperback earlier this year.

PAUL SMITH is Professor of Modarn History at the University of Southampton.

THOMAS SUTCLIFFE is a Producer for BBC Radio.

WILLIAM THOMAS is a Student of Christ Church, Oxford.

EDWARD TIMMS is a Fellow of Gonville and Caiua College, Cambridge.

FRANK TUOHY's collection of stories *Live Bait* was published in 1978.

JENNIFER UGLOW is the editor of *Essays On Literature and Art by Walter Pater*, 1975.

WILLIAM VAUGHAN's *German Romanticism and English Art* will be reviewed in a future issue of the *TLS*.

ROBERT WELLS's verse translation of Virgil's *Georgics* was published last year.

MALCOLM YAPP's most recent book is *Strategies of British India: Iran and Afghanistan 1798–1850*, 1980.

Author, Author

Competition Ne 118

Reeders are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send ns the answers so that they reach this office not later than May 13. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 118" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on May 20.

1 These are regions of possibility, and . . . I could not but speculate on the future. Here are wide tracts of fertile soil watered by abundent rains. The temperate sun warms the life within the soil . . . here at last is a land where white men may rule and prospar . . . . Above the whole scene waved The Flag, and in the foreground on the sandy beach the great-grandchildren of the crossing-sweeper and the sandwich-man sported by the waves that beat by the Southern Pole, or sang aloud for joy in the beauty of their home and the pride of their race.

2 But in Victoria's reign, when the tide of emigration was still running stronger than ever, the postage stamp kept the cottage at home in touch with the son who had "gone to the Colonies", and oftan he would return on a visit with money in his pocket, and tales of new lands of equality and self-help and maybe an affectionate contempt for slow old ways at home.

3 How can one explain what England is to the South Africans who come to the country as visitors, tourists, immigrants, students? To them England is truth, and it is dream; England is reality, and it is pure vision. . . . England is all they have hoped for; yet it is a disappointment that endures and endures, long after thay have left her or settled in her.

Competition Ne 114

No answers were received.

Answers:

1 Lord Henry was a great electioneerer,
Burrowing for beroughs like a mad rabbit,
But county coctests cost him rather dearer,
Because the neighbouring Earl of Gittipabbit
Had English influence on the self-same sphere here.
His son, the Honourable Dick Dicedrabbit,
Was member for the "other interest" (meaning
The same self-interest with a different leaning).

Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, canto 14, stanza 70.

2 One rainy afternoon Lord Curzon was entreated to deliver in the hall his lecture on Fish. He readily complied, and succeeded in amusing his audience more, and instructing them as much, as any of his more pretentious brother lecturers who have done. We shall not report the lecture, but we refer those who may be curious on the subject to the next meeting of the Pantopragmatic Society, under the presidency of Lord Fecing-both-ways, and the vice-presidency of Lord Michin Mulchay.

T. L. Peacock, *Gryll Grange*, chapter 18.

3 Lord Lancer is a man ef honour. He loves the arts. He has declared that lies in public. He never goes back on his word. But I must ba off. Lord Lancer does not subscribe to the view that poets can treat time with nonchalance.

Harold Pinter, *No Man's Land*, act 2.

Recently published annuals include two from Macmillan, *Thomas Hardy Annual No 1* (205pp. £20. 0 333 32022 0), edited by Norman Page; and *O'Casey Annual No 2* (179pp. £20. 0 333 32458 7) edited by Robert G. Lowery. The Hardy volume includes essays on "Hardy and his Biographers" by Peter J. Casagrande, "The Love Story in *Two on a Tower*" by John Bayley, "Words, in all their intimate accents" (on Hardy's metrics) by Tom Paulin, "Thomas Hardy, Donald Davie, England and the English" by John Lucas; and a survey of recent Hardy studies, with reviews and a bibliography. The O'Casey volume also has an annual bibliography and a review of the Editor's own *Essay on Sean O'Casey's Autobiography* by Michael Kenneally, who also contributes an essay on "Models and Mediators in the Autobiography of Sean O'Casey", beside pieces by Malk Hu[illegible] Wang Zuoliang ("O'Casey in China") and Violet M. O'Vaile. [illegible] *Studies*, Volume XVI (1982) is [illegible] by James D. Simmonds (199pp. University of Pittsburgh Press. $17.95. 8229 3465 5). It includes essays [illegible] "The Wedding in *Paradise Lost*" [illegible] Cheryl H. Fresch, "Versions of [illegible] Bard in Marvell's 'On Mr Milton's *Paradise Lost*'" by Kenneth G[illegible] and "The Epicedial Garland in [illegible] *das*" by Charlotte F. Otten. [illegible] 12 of *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, from the American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies, [illegible] also just appeared, under the [illegible] torship of Harry C. Payne [illegible] University of Wisconsin [illegible] £18.75. 0 299 09270 4). It includes [illegible] essay by Jacques Barzun, "The [illegible] tury of Light: Some Unanswered Questions", and "Diderot, [illegible] America" by Jacques Chouillet.

to the editor

Women Writers

Sir, – I admitted in the course of my review of W. Warren Wagar's *Terminal Visions* (March 18) that I was, am, old-fashioned when it comes to assuring ladies (Letters, April 1). I am still not ready to talk about "Austen's fiction", though I have moved on from the polite "Miss" to the familiar "Jane". Whatever the tradition is in Italy – where I do not like being called Burgess by perfect strangers who interview me – the use of the plain surname in Britain is mentioned chiefly by male schoolsnnd clubs. It has the wrong tone for ladies. Personably I have to be taught to be genuine. And, whatever we're told, T. E. is the only Eliot and George Eliot is a unabbreviable pseudonym, like Mark Twain.

ANTHONY BURGESS,
44 Rue Grimaldi, 98000 Monaco.

Churchill in Pink Silk

Sir, – In his review of *The Goebbels Diaries 1939–1941* (March 18) Harold James suggests that the Nazis' most brilliant political speaker was confronted in his fantasy of British political decadence by his belief that Churchill wore pink silk underwear". This was no fantasy. Churchill did indeed wear silk underwear and to the best of my recollection it was at least rose-coloured, something between "natural" and *odsse de nymphe* ourrée.

ALASTAIR FORBES.
1251 Chatesu d'Oex, Switzerland.

Peter Porter

Sir, – In Blake Morrison's illuminating and rightly praiseful study of Peter Porter's *Collected Poems* (April 1), there are nevertheless small inaccuracies.

The line in the early poem "Metamorphosis" is "I am only the image I can force upon the town", not "I am the only image . . . ". Porter's poem "Nine O'Clock Thoughts on the Mind" is dated 1962/3 in the *Collected Poems*, and "The World of Simon Stone" appeared in *Poems Ancient & Modern* in 1964. The two poems of ("Office Friendships" and "Scene the House Party") which Morrison implies were models for these were written later. "Office Friendships" is in *Pleasures Of The Flesh* and "Fiction: the House Guest" in *Be My Guest!* (1975). The poem was directly inspired by Simon Raven poem. Porter's satire and his use of fantasy "Sending at Sordid Creek") was for me to imitate *him*, not the other way round, though "Office Friendships" was an attempt to write a Auden's "The Love Feast" upper room at midnight . . .").

GAVIN EWART.
Kooilwerth Court, Lower Road, London SW15.

Blake Morrison, in reviewing *Collected Poems* of Peter Porter (April 1), refers to that author's "brief stint to the Group" which "never lasted for much even in the 1960s". The Group was not anything that any allegiance: it was a creative seminar whose purpose was to discuss the work of young writers to the work of their contemporaries. Typed sheets of work to be discussed were circulated before each session, and meetings were held over periods roughly corresponding to university terms.

I have before me a complete file of the papers read at the Group, from late 1966 when I started it to summer 1972 when it adapted itself into the Poetry Workshop based upon the Poetry Society. During that period Porter seldom missed a meeting. In fact I read at the Group himself on seveteen occasions, more than any other participant, except George Macbeth and Peter Redgrove. This was an œuvre impressive in its variety: 106 poems over nine years – and quality. Morrison himself quotes some sixteen poems which first appeared on Group sheets,

Catullus

Sir, – Freddy Hurdis-Jones (Letters, February 4) and James Michie may be amateurs, but they are net necessarily fools. Whatever deference may be due to scholarly opinion, Christepher Stace's claims (Letters, March 18) go beyond the bounds of good manners and good sense. On this, as on all other matters, we can safely assume that scholarly opinion is divided.

Two points, then, in fevour of the amateurs:

(a) *trusore* may be "hopelessly rare", but there is not much doubt that it is a frequentative of *trudere*. So to translate *trusantem* as "wanking" is as unlikely (at least) as to take *puellae* as a dative of advantage. (And how, by the way, did Catullus know what he was wanking about?)

(b) For purely technicsl reasons it is very unlikely that the peem describes anything that actually happened. *Vix fenino supina, facile vir pronus, se movere potest*: tha actioe described in tbe last line would not be possible without tbe strong assistance of a third party. The scene described is "hilarious" – we are told so six times in four lines, rather repetitively. It only takes three more to describe the incident and complete tha peem. Whatever the identity of the girl, she would have to be there for the incidant to be as comical as Catullus expects us to find it.

I doubt if Cato believed, or. was intended to believe, that the scene was a real one. What he was expected to laugh at was the product of Catullus' lewd and comle fancy. The alternative explanation, on the contrary, depicts a scene (and indeed a mentality) that borders on the punitive and severe.

D. B. TAYLOR.
Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd, 108 Cowley Road, Oxford.

'Edmund Ironside'

Sir, – May I present the other sida of the coin on tbe authorship of the two anonymous plays which Eric Sams (August 13, 1982) would like to see as early works by Shakespeare? If one is willing to accept vocabulary statistics as evidence. In such tases, then the greatest weight sbould be given to those statistics which use the full vocabulary and less weight to such methods as used by Eliot Slater (Letters, March 18) which use only a small sample. I, myself, employ two metbods: one, relative vocabulary overlap, is similar to Slater's rare word overlap, except that it uses all the words of the texts beleg compared; the other is a cluster analysis employing the forty most frequently used words in Elizabetlan letters.

A cluster analysis of forty-one Elizabethan texts, anonymous and attributed, supports Slater's finding that the anoeymous play *Edward III* clusters closely with the two anonymous *Henry VI* plays, having Euclidean distances to them of 3.747 percent and 4.262 per cent respectively (in a range of 2.223 per cent for the two *Tamburlaines* to 20.343 per cent between Marlowe's *Pashionate Shepherd* and poems by the Countess of Pembroke). It also clusters somewhat more closely with both parts of the anonymous *King John* at 3.275 per cent and 4.104 per cent and they amount to more than half the quotations in his review. No one can be sure how far an audience affects a poet or, indeed, the poet his audience; but these facts suggest that Peter Porter's connection with the Group was less transient than Blake Morrison alleges.

PHILIP HOBSBAUM.
Department of English, The University, Glasgow.

'The Sacred Executioner'

Sir, – J. Duncan M. Derrett (April 1) professes to find ludicrous the tbesis of my book, *The Secred Executioner*, that antisemitism has arisen from the role of the Jews in the Christian myth as executioners ef the Divine sacrifice. The eenveners of Vatican Council II did not find this thesis ludicrous when they sought to absolve the Jews of the charge of daicide with its eccompanying doctrine of the accursedness ef the Jews. Nor did the Fathers of the Church who declared that the curse of Cain was upon the Jews. Professor Derrett is apparently unaware of the msss of evidence that has been collected by Christian writers such as Maieelm Hay, Friedrich Heer, Rosemary Ruether, James Parkes and many ethers to show Christian responsibility for antisemitism. Hia complacency is fortunately becoming rare among thinking Christians, as recent articles and letters in *The Times* show.

Since Derrett does not give the slightest indication of my line of argument, but merely holds up to ridicule one garbled detail after another, may I axplain how anthropological considerations enter into my thesis? The role of tbe Jews in the Christian myth, I argue, is similar to that of dark figures in previous myths associated with human sacrifice: examples are Set, in Egyptian mythology, and Loki, in Scandinavian mythology. These figures, as a wealth of anthropological data makes probable, derive from a ritual practice of cursing and driving into the desert the performar of the necessary sacrifice, so that the triba or community can absolve itself of the deed of blood by which it achieves salvation. In the Christinn myth, the role of dark figure or Sacred Executioner is performed individually by the eponymous Judas, and collectively by the Jewish people.

Derrelt, however, has his own explanation of antisemitism: It is due to the Jews' "self-imposed and . . . lachrymose endogamy". Translated into English, this means that the Jews brought antisemitism on themselves by their gloomy, self-pitying, Gentile-hating exclusiveness, shown especially in their ban on intermarriage. This view is not so much an explanation of antisemitism as a manifestation of it. In fact, the Jewish ban on Intermarriage with non-Jews is exactly parallel with tbe Christian ban on Intermarriage with non-Christians: le, it is a protection of the faitb, not an expression of racialism or hatred.

Derrelt states that I have left out of my book an all-important fact: "The ancient Jews (aod many of their descendants) sbare the genuine oriental concept, of immense age, that the sufferings of the just are an atonement for the wicked." This "fact", Derrett presumably means, refutes my contention that tha Hebrew Bible opposes the concept of vicarious atonement. What, then, does Derrett make of the passages in tbe Hebrew Bible that explicitly oppose the idea that one man's suffering can atone for the sins of others? "The fethers shall not be put to death for tbe children, neither shall the childreo be put to death for the fatbers: every man shall die for his own sin" (Deut 24:16; see also II Kings 14:16; II Chronicles 25:4; Jeremiah 31:30; Ezekiel 18:20). On the basis of such teaching, Jewish thinkars such as Nachmanides rejected the Christian doctrines of Original Sin aod Vicarious Atonement which blamed Adam's sin oo his descendants, and also declared It expiable by another's suffering.

Many modern scholars argue that Jesus was a Pbarisee teacher who was executed as a cebel by the Romans because he was a claimant to the Jewish throee, ie, a messiah-figure. Derrett dismisses this view as unworthy ef discussion. In the process, he also dismisses the bulk of mudern Biblical scholarship, including the werk of Rudolf Bultmann. Only he, Derrett, is aware of the true peint ef departure, which is te regard Jesus as one who believed in a "super-religion", whe regarded himself as a sacrifice, who believed "he could redeem *all* cultures from the burden of their commen inheritnce (they were ell slaves to sin)". This windy stuff is to be substituted for the modern effort to see Jesus in his Jewish background as a Jewish teacher and activist. This effort, however, will not be halted by Professor Derrett's pathetic obscurantism.

HYAM MACCOBY.
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'The Rare Art Traditions'

Sir, – Martin Kemp's arithmetic in his review of Joseph Alsop's *The Rere Art Traditions* (March 25) is sadly awry if he thinks that an increase in value from five florins to 1,500 represants "a gain of 300 per cent". A gain of 300 per cent would amount to fifteen florins, giving a present value of twenty florins. In fact the value increased 300-fold, the actual gain being 299 times the original value – that is, 29,900 per cent!

PHILIP M. DE PARIS.
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Dictionaries and Trade Marks

Sir, – I suppose it is unlikely that many of your readers will have paid attention to the EEC draft directive on trade marks. It does, however, contain a provision which directly concerns scholars and editors of literary works of reference.

Both the directive and the accompanying draft regulation (articles 4 and 9 respectively) will impose e legal duty on "publishers of n dictionary, encyclopaedie or similar work" to ensure that any reproduction of a word which is also used as a trade mark shall indicate that it is a registared trade mark. The purpose of this innovation is to hinder the effect of eommon usage turnieg a successful trade mark (eg Biro) into a generic term.

It is, however, an inadmissible introduction into English law of a vested interest distorting the function of a dictionary, which is to reflect actual use of words rather than their legal status. Editors have a difficult enough time as it is resisting the attempts of humao rights groups to censor unfortunele uses of racial names; they will need to be even more vigilant to resist the similar attempts of business groups.

Neither the Commission's explanatory memorandum nor the report of the House of Lords scrutiny committee nor the debates in the European Parliament show any awareness of a literary interest in this issue. Publishers of works of reference owe no duty to trade-mark owners as a class: their duties are rather to their readers and to scbolarship. It must therefore remain an editorial decision based on linguistic usage whether to define a "catarpillar tractor" as a "tractor with two endless metal belts" (*Shorter OED*) or as a trade mark applied to "earth-mixing and mechanical handling equipment" (*UK Press Gazette Guide to Regd Trade-names*).

May one hope that even at this late stage representations can be made to the Commission and Government for the removal of this noxious provision?

NEVILLE MARCH HUNNINGS.
11 Russell Hill, Purley, Surrey.

'The English Hero'

Sir, – As I said in my earlier letter (March 11), I have no unreasonable expectatien that Robert Halsband wnuld read my essay, even if he was reviewing it. His answer (Letters, April 1) indicates that he has stirred himself to read the title, which contains a quotation from Swift, which he has misunderstood. Swift was talking about refusing ("declining") a lofty style, and the eassy was concerned with this refusal, which extended to mock-heroie. Hew Halsband then "slipped into the error of assuming tbe declining style and heroic strain amounted to the mock-heroie", end wbat he "jotted down" in his notes on that occasion, are doubtless matters of absorbing nuto biographical interest.

But since nobody could be expected to have the slightest idea of what the essay was about from Halsband's review, may I be permitted to say that it dealt with the theme of heroic self-portrayal ("self-apology"), notably in the *Verses on the Death*, and with Swift's self-conscieusness abeut adopting heroic postures? Readers acquainted with Swift's poems might think this theme (whatever the merits of the essay) not quite as unrelated to a volume on *The English Hero 1660–1800* as Mr Halsbend's reading of his own jottings appeers to suggest to him.

CLAUDE RAWSON.
Department of English, University of Warwick, Coventry.

'Trial by Jury'

Sir, – I fear that Sir Zelman Cowen's memory ef Gilbert's *Triel by Jury* (April 1) has failed him. The judge had risen to his position not by marrying a rich attorney's elderly, ugly daughter, but only by being engaged to her. When his practice began to flourish, he jilted her: *that* was his qualification for trying a breach of promise of marriage. It will be remembered that the judge dealt with the case by marrying the plaintiff.

PHILIP TAIT.
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Newspapers in Germany

Sir, – In his review of John Retallack's play *Berlin, Berlin* (Commentary, March 11), Ronald Hayman takes him to task for not knowing "that there are no national daily papers in Germany", but this is not so. There are at least two national dailies, Axel Springer's *Die Welt* and *Bild* (a tabloid), as well as a number of most influential aod Important supraregional daily papers such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Rundschau* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* to "close or . . . narrow the gap between public events and private life".

They can be bought at every bookstall throughout West Germany.

EVA BORNEMANN.
Scharten, Austria.

The Tiptoft Chronicle

Sir, – R. B. Dobson in reviewing Antonia Grausden's *Historical Writing in England*, volume II (March 18) repeats her statement that the chronicle attributed to John Tiptoft is lost. It may be useful to point out that the only known manuscript is now HM 19960 in the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California, and will be described in greater detail in the catalogue of its medieval manuscripts now approaching publication.

A. I. DOYLE.
University Library, Palace Green, Durham.

The introductory essay to the catalogue of the exhibition of drawings by Henry William Bunbury, reviewed on March 11, is written by John Riely. We apologize for misspelling his name.

Doing without the gods

N. M. Horsfall

GORDON WILLIAMS
Technique and Ideas in the Aeneid
301pp. Yale University Press. £22.50.
0 300 02852 0

Virgilian studies in English creep unswervingly – a handful of commentaries excepted – towards their nadir. That does not mean that the topic is drained dry by generations of scholarly effort. Far from it; we lack, for example, adequate commentaries on two-thirds of the *Aeneid*. But, mysteriously, Virgil has nowhere and never attracted the very best of Latinists, above all in the post-war English-speaking world, as ten years of reviewing books on the *Aeneid* grimly confirms. Such progress as there is tends to be in articles; the books which might summarize what we have learned and thrust forward our understanding are not written.

Gordon Williams, progressing from a fellowship at Balliol to chairs of Latin at St Andrews and Yale, awakens expectations: the first of his four big books, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry*, quite contrary to its unfortunate and universally employed acronym, has now served as a prolix but vigorous stimulant to readers of Latin for fifteen years. He descrved, and won, admiration for the synthesis achieved between the linguistic and historical understanding of Roman poetry, symbolized by Eduard Fraenkel, the teacher to whom he has paid warm tribute, and the literary analysis of poetic texts, where he has attempted to close the gap as Latin pants along a good lap behind English in the sophistication of its critical techniques.

Williams addresses himself to two questions: first, whether the *Aeneid* is a poem about the mythical world, linked non-integrally to the present, or about "the world of normal human experience, with a poetic claim to historical reality"; and second, "what ideas are expressed in the epic and how can they be recognised as such." That "normal human experience" is the right answer to the first question, all serious students of Virgil, at least post-war, have recognized. To the colossal perspectives his second question opens, he devotes explicitly thirteen pages, and though he is of course right to insist that the *Aeneid* is rich in ideas of powerful personal and historical import, densely expressed and often standing in unresolved conflict, while containing no dominant ideology, readers may feel thwarted by the absence of extended and systematic discussion of the second topic.

The gods dominate tha book by their absence: Neptune enraged peering forth from the waves, Iris slipping threugh tha sky on her yellow wings, Juno tossing her head in fury are no moro. Williams is beset by a compulsion to demythologize the *Aeneid*; for him the gods are figures (or trepes), menns whereby the poet expresses his own judgments without obtruding upon the narrative, maans to embody or personify heman motivation, means to resolve the conflicting claims of free will and determinism. Fate, predictably, fares no better. This constantently overstated argumeot includes trenchantly expressed and still valuable paragraphs, whose truth has in many cases not been in doubt this ceotury: Richard Heinze published his spleedid and unsuperseded study of the *Aeneid* in 1902 (4tb edition, 1928) and his chapter on "Das Ubernatürliche" already indicates just how best to handle Virgil's gods.

Two small observations of detail should indicate the dangers of Williams's extremism. First, he claims for Virgil as original the conception of Fate as suggesting the inevitability of Roman history in the years between Aeneas and the *Aeneid*. Bafflingly, however, no mention is made of Naevius' "Punic War", a short pre-hexameter epic composed two centuries before Virgil. There Jupiter consoled Aeneas' mother Venus "with hope of things to come" and Venus actually gave Aeneas' father Anchises books "containing the future". That text Virgil aed his readers knew intimately: the *Aeneid's* prephecias of Roman history are indissoctable from their literary antecedents. Williams's *Aeneid* is modernized and secularized, unacceptably; it remains a poem of the most complex literary resonances and though Virgil's gods of course express an individual vision, they are simultaneously the gods of Homer, Naevius and Ennius and cannot be reduced in a paragraph to perfect compatibility with the non-theology of Epicurus and Lucretius.

Secondly, Williams updates Virgil's portents and predigies; he finds that their interpretation is purely in terms of ideas and emotions already existing in the persons concerned. Neither Jupiter nor Fate can seed them: they do oot exist. The sequence of two portents and ao oracle early in Book Seven, for exemple, suggests otherwise: they sew disseet between King Latinus and Queen Amata, they point away from Prince Turnus of Ardea as a fit suitor for tbeir daughter Lavinia, and towards the late-arrived, unknown stranger Aeneas. They surpise, confuse and dismay the human actors. Though Williams is of course right to insist that the *Aeneid* doas not constitute evidance that Virgil held a given set of beliefs, the sense of extra-terrestrial forces which the poam conveys is far from being eliminated.

Williams makes modest claims for the translations which accompany his copious quotations; they show, actually, that he has thought long and hard about the innumerable problems of interpretation and language in the poem and will help both students and specialists. But it is very hard to determine the book's audience. It is almost bare of notes; the bibliography is individualistic, as the author allowa, and frankly inadequate. Thus only specialists will realize that the rare glow of learning which illuminates page 205 derives from an article published in Cambridge (UK) in 1975, and fewer still, that a dozen pages on tbe function of the figure of apostrophe re-cover matters fully treeted in five studies from the period 1900–1925. Whethar the Inteotion was to save money or to woo nen-specialists, it is misconceived.

Such coyness helps no one and serves to disguise two grave issues. First, the strong sense that behind the modernities of terminology there lurks a conservative and derivative book. It is perfectly possible to say new things about the *Aeneid*, but few will be found here. It is also true that much of what Williams says, though chiefly reflecting preoccupations of the period 1900–39 Seven, for exemple, suggests otherwise: they sew disseet between King Latinus and Queen Amata, they point away from Prince Turnus of Ardea as a fit suitor for tbeir daughter with earrative technique, with inconsistencies of structure and changes of plan in the unfinished epic end with problems of fate and free will, for example, can indeed stand exhumation. Bibliographical specialists, muttering the names of Helga Eduard Norden, Prescott, Carroll Matthael, Crump and others long forgotten, will reach for their felt-tops and reconstruct Williams's curiously old-fashioned schedule of reading and intellectual horizons.

Second, the *Aeneid* as Williams presenta it has a strange flavour: an essential ingredient in the poem's texture is missing. Arguments are pursued vigorously, even lucidly through the poem, but the critic imposes his ewn moulds and patterns and presents Virgil as a man of ideas, rather than words. Far and away the most learned poet of Roman antiquity expected readers of similar calibre. In Williams's argumentative and noteless pages the issues discussed are largely stripped of their history. Many of Virgil's unresolved ambiguities and inconsistencies are themselves inherited from complex literary antecedents, which the poet either simply preferred not to disentangle. Of which, net a word. Concern for the poet's sources would bave illuminated, not impeded the argument. Perhaps an inevitable consequence of Williams's approach is an unfortunate crop of misunderstandings and errors of detail.

Inexplicably, Virgil has come to bring out the worst in his critics' style. Ever since Otis's influential *Virgil* (1963), a striking study in barbarous prose, new standards of unreadability are repeatedly attained. Williams does not disappoint, though readers from his *Figures of Thought* may have the going easier. For all the well-hidden and pleasantly out-dated merits of *Technique and Ideas*, it is a melancholy reflection that the cost per page has risee seme 1300 per cent since the Indispensable *TORP* (1968).

Crossbred children

Robert Wells

RICHARD STONEMAN (Editor)
Daphne Iolo Laureli Translations of classical poetry from Chaucer to the present
330pp. Duckworth. £24.
0 7156 1646 3.

"A mere modero wit can like nothing that is not *modern*, and a pedant nothing that is not *Greek*", Pope observed in the Preface to his translation of the *Iliad*. The translator, he said, "must hope to please but a few". Pope's observation is truer now than it was in his own time. As the classics have ceased to be familiar, so tha reading of those translotions which were once considered an essantial part of the sum of English poetry has fallen away too; and the neglect has been compounded in this century by a generl distaste for reading long poems. How many taka Kaets at his word and look into Chapman's Homer? *Daphne Into Laurel* hrings before us a continuous and largoly forgotten tradition of classical translation running from a few lines of Virgil in Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women* to C. H. Sisson's free and faithful version for modern London of Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*. The naed for such an anthology has been felt for a long time.

Richard Stoneman claims in his useful introduciloo that "the history of English literature could nimost be written in tarms of the influence of the classics", and *Daphne Into Laurel* provides frequent evidence of how English poetry has been sustained by tha practica of transintion. This appears first in matters of dictioo and technique. Since the question of what to say is already settled by the original, tho translator confronts peculiarly directly the question of poetic means. Blank verse was invented by Surrey for his version of the second and fourth books of the *Aeneid*. Without the various versiona of Pindar, the *Odes* of Collins and Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" could not exist. And many auch instances could be given.

The imaginative debt is also indicated. The sway of Golding's version of the *Metamorphoses* over Shakespeare appears not simply in verbal echoes but in a constant preoccupation with mysterious transformation. George Sandys's version, published sixty years after Golding's, was among Keats's favourite reading, affecting the movement of his verse and giviog him, among other details, the lowing helfer at the altar in "Ode on a Grecian Urn". Sandys's version has o particular claim to fame. The last eight books, translated while he was Treasurer of the Virginia Company at Jamestown, seem to be tha first piece of extonded poetic writing in English to come from America. Sandys said of his poem that it was "a double atraoger, sprung from tha stock of the ancient Romaos, but hred in the New World, of the rudaness whereof it cannot but participata". Ovid's account of the Mediterranean dream-time, of fluid natural forms and places still to be named, is entered and changed by the landscapes of the American wilderness.

As *Daphne into Laurel* acknowledges by its title, translation means transformation. A good translation stands on its own, a new-made thing, aed not in a state of alavish – Dr Johnson's word – dependence. One must not quarrel with the fact that a transformation has taken place. All one can do is observe and judge it. The translator is faced at every point by choices – the initiel technical choices which determine the cast of tha whole work and, following from these, the choices that are made word by word and sentence by sentence. The translator entars the work through these choices. The essential thing is that they should be consistent and create a tona. What smerges from Stoneman's exhibits, which run the gamut from literal closeness to loose imitation, is that the tone can never be exactly that of the original. It may be close, or it may, with a result that is equally successful in its own terms, be very distant. A translator is alao a poet – Novells called him "the poet of poetry". What can a poet do but speak in his own voice? Ben Jonson's masterly version of Horace's ode to Venus – the poet in middle age begging the goddess not to torment him – tekes few freedoms, and yet the voice is Jooson's through aod through. One of the pleasures of reading translation is that it is possible to watch with unmatched intimacy how a particular poet's mind works, because one can know as one caonot with an original poem the point from which the poet begins. Perhaps the best way of understandiog the range of possibility is to think of the translator and the author translated as the parents and the translation as the child. Tha characteristics of both parents will be present in an unaccountabla combination but it may be possible to say that lo this or that respect the child takes after oos parent rather than the other.

Daphne into Laurel contains a scattering of obvious mistakes. A line from a passaga by Churchyard is missing. Two lines in a fine veraion by Bunting of Horaca's "Eheu fugaces" are printed as one. The brief passages of information and comment which introduce each translator tend to be random and are sometimes plain wrong. This habit of inaccuracy makes it difficult to trust the book on other occasions, particularly where – translatioo has its vagaries – one comes upon something puzzling or contorted in the verse. A deeper fault is that the book is much too short. Lyric and epigram are served well enough, but narrative, philosophical and satirical works oeed to be represented by extracts of far greater length if a sense is to be given of the translator's accomplishment.

The carelessness and the often tantalizing brevity ahauld not mask for pleasures which are offered here and the discoveries which are to be made: versions of Horace by Philip Francis and Allon Ramsay; of the *Aeneid* by James Harington and William Morris; Gifford's Juvenal and Hay's Martial; tha various translations by Sir John Beaumont and Sir Richard Fanshawe; Chapman, Dryden and Pope are here, of course; we are also frequently shown an unfamiliar side to the work of other familiar names. Yet it should not be necessary to depend on an anthology. The Arts Council has declared its support for the bringing back into print of unobtainable classics. A beginning might be made with some of the finest neglected work of which *Daphne into Laurel* givos a first taste.

Polite no longer

Imre Salusinszky

HOWARD D. WEINBROT
Alexander Pope and tha Traditions of Formal Verse Satire
388pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £26.
0 691 06344 3

According to F. R. Leavis in *Revaluations*, Pope's satirical portrait of Addison in the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* is polite, urbane, frea of personal malice. In contrast, the portrait of Harvey a little later (o the poem betrays "an lodulgence in personal fealing, the effect depending upon a rejection of all the demands of politeness and social discretion". The aim of Howard Wainbrot's elegant book is to trace this apparent dissociation back to Classical sources, and to Pope's conscious modulation of the opposing modes of Horace and Juvenal. Pope is indeed "Something like Horace", but Weinbrot's polemical messag is that ha is also, and more than is generally assumed, something like Juvenal and Persius.

In this argument, the crucial years are the 1730s, when Pope becomes increasingly committed to the opposition to Walpole, and increasingly subject to attacks – upon his dignity, family and masculinity – by administratloo hacks. As the political outlook grows hopeless, Pope loses faith in the reformative and restorative powers of verse: the muted, logical, optimistic strains of Horace yield to the tragic, isolated and confronting tones of Juvenal. The assumption behind the *Epistles to Several Persons* is of a world that may still be saved through "sober advice"; *Arbuthnot*, addressed to an important citizen of a faded dynasty, questions that assumptioo; in the *Epilogue to the Satires* it has givco way to overwhelming gloom, as "Nothing is Sacred oow but Villany".

Tbere are several aspects of Welebrot's study which will not appeal to more contemporary critical taste. One of these is the benign view he holds of poetic influence, with Pope calmly taking from Classical tradition whatever suits his immediate purpose. Another is the insistent reduction of poetie reference to historical specificity. Pope's brilliant declaration, in the *Epistle to Fortescue*, that be will "Bare the mean Heart that lurks beneath a Star", is seen not as a generalized reference to corruption in high places, but as a specific shot at the personal stellar emblem of Sir Robert Walpole.

As a work of specialized scholarship, the book provides abundant information oo Pope's influence, and the controversies which swirled constantly around him, and on tha influence ha exercised. Later in this eighteenth century, Pope's influences are shown to have lost their bold cutting modulating instrument: where he could coovince or lash al will, they could only plead or sulk.

Two recent additions to Granada's Archaeological Sites paperback series are *Epidauros* by R. A. Tomlinson (98pp. £6.95. 0 246 11398 7) and *Armenia* by R. J. A. Wilson (128pp. £6.95. 0 246 11386 0). The series aims to re-examine in detail the archaeological sites in the light of recent scholarship and excavation and to set them in their archaeological and historical cootext. Part of the *Epidouros* outlines the history of the sanctuary and the myth and cult of Asklepios ceotred on the site, while Port Two looks in detail at individual monuments, including the Temple of Thymala, the Abaton, the Kaimeni, the Theatre and the Stadium. In Part One of *Armenia* R. J. A. Wilson examines this noted late-Roman villa and its mosaics under three headings: "Myth and Date", "Mosaics and Mosaicists" and "Context and Ownership". The volume contains plans and black-and-white photographs, together with notes, bibliography and index.

The grammar of the genes

Alan Mackay

JEREMY CHERFAS
Man Made Life: A Genetic Engineering Primer
270pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £16 (paperback, £5.50).
0 631 13026 8

PAUL and ANNE EHRLICH
Extinction: The Causes and Consequences of the Disappearance of Species
360pp. Gollancz. £9.95.
0 575 03114 X

BRIAN LEITH
The Descent of Darwin: A Handbook of Doubts about Darwinism
176pp. Collins. £7.95.
0 00 219548 8

PHILIP KITCHER
Abusing Science: The Case against Creationism
152pp. MIT Press. £10.50.
0 262 11085 7

With the advance of molecular biology out of the laboratory into the factory and the hospital, possibilities for genetic engineering, talked about since Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, have become realities, and political and social discussions of evolution have consequently sharpened. Shelfloads of books reflect problems of evolution at the various levels of organization, from molecules to intellectual life. Every day, discoveries about the fundamental genetic machinery are being made which have consequences for the whole edifice. Science in general too, with catastrophe theory and mathematical ecology, is steadily improving our understanding of the behaviour of complex systems. Altogether we may expect a big re-synthesis of our picture of evolution – certainly any picture today must be transitory.

The greatest discovery of our century has been that, parallel to the structure of proteins and the other substances which make up the biochemical pathways of all living matter, there is an informational system made of the same atoms which describe the proteins in another language: that of DNA. It is as if an anthropologist, come from another world to study our material civilization, had left the Ethnographic Gallery of the British Museum and wandered into the Reading Room.

In the library of genetic material to which we have recently gained access, we have learnt our ABC and are now working through the grammar. Indeed, Jeremy Cherfas's book *Man Made Life* (no hyphen!) is correctly subtitled "A Genetic Engineering Primer" and teaches us how to form simple sentences in the language of life. The procedures are like those of word-processing and the catalogues of restriction enzymes and complex biochemicals are, with good reason, like those of integrated circuits and components for the computer.

Nature is dialectical. The DNA sequences determine the protein molecules which make up and operate the organism, which itself regenerates the DNA sequences and passes them on in edited form. Informational structures are material, like the rest of the organism, and subject to the same laws of chemistry. In passing from one phase to the other, from information to structure and back, the joint system evolves. Each cell in a multi-cellular organism has a copy, written in DNA, of the instructions for the building and operation of the whole organism, just as each member of a theocratic society has a copy of the Holy Book. The system is of exquisite complexity and the implications of what is being found at the molecular level are only gradually effecting our understanding of animal populations. Indeed, since even the precess of the development of a complete organism from the fertilized egg is not well understood, particularly as regards the euphonious unfolding of all its parts and subsystems, it is difficult to discuss the ateps by which these organs and all the machinery aod programs for their operation themselves developed in the past. Nevertheless, we have to discuss a complex system as best we can at all levels simultaneously, since e man consists of some 10^{27} atoms which cannot even in principle be analysed individually, although many events at the atomic level are important for the understanding of his functioning.

Darwin himself had only n vagua idea of what the hereditary material might be like – ha bed before etoms end molecules had become familiar. Traditionel Darwinism is like enthropology without language – only one side of the essential duality was visible. Today's "Neo-Darwinian" embodies the adjustments which the received view of Darwinian evolution has had to make to edapt itself to the findings of molecular biology. Derwin began with large organisms aod of the genomes of complete animals to store them in some computer memory, and even if we did so it would still not be easy to run off a few copies of the Dodo if we wanted them.

However, it is within sight that the whole of even the human genome could be read and recorded in the computer. It comprises about 10^{10} bits – abeut eighty times the total contents of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The genome of a bacterium like E. coli is 6.8×10^6 bits, largely known, and that of the phage ΦX174 is 5,486 bases, 10^4 bits. One of the big surprises is that perhaps 90 per cent of the human genome is "Nonsense DNA", which does not give viable proteins when translated. Evolution is all very well for bacteria which reproduce every twenty minutes and where some thousands of characters can be selected for by the survival or not of individuals in a very large population. However, it becomes less credible that large mammals are effectively choosing, threugh natural selection, individual letters in the genetic message of 10^9 bits. The larger creatures must be operating with much larger components end choosing complete subsystems which have evolved elsewhere, or choosing how to control machinery with which they are provided but have not used. They must be working mostly in the higher reaches of their hierarchy of structures. "Redundant" DNA may be concerned in this.

Even the genococcus did not itself evolve the penicillinase which enables it to survive in the face of antibiotic treatment. It acquired the complete gene as a plasmid irem another bacterium which had been living in contact with moulds for immense periods. To counter such acquired resistance to antibiotics we will need to use all tho tricks with which the evolution of a high intelligence and the transmission of acquired knowledge has provided us.

Higher up in the hierarchy from molecules to primates, Brian Leith discusses current theoretical inadequacies in neo-Darwinism. He is worried, for example, about the controversy between those who support the idea of a steady, incramental evalution and those who prefer that of "punctuated equilibrium" now current nmong people who work at the level of fossils. We know now that biological structures (like individual protein molecules) are much more dynamic than was thought eorlier. Mutations are constantly being tried and, if the structure being tested is a good one, most mutations are rejected as bad or accepted as neutral, but the overall shape and active site of the protein remain unchanged. Through C. H. Waddington's concepts of "creodes" – paths in a mountainous topography of many dimensions, now quantified in catastrophe theory – we can accept that some species, like the horseshoe crab, remain trapped in pockets, stable against disturbances, while others, like ourselves, have passed down a river valley as it were, changing rapidly as we go. Leith also discusses the recent fuss among taxonomists, some of whom, working with data only on large-scale structures, have been classifying fossil-organisms which have evolved by variation and mutation of DNA no longer available for study.

On the sociological level we have Philip Kitcher's presentation of *The Case Against Creationism*. Kitcher explnins the facts, although crentionism is not concerned with facts, but is a reaction against the uncerteities of life and the complexities of science. In terms of coherence of thought and action, creationism mey be more conducive to the survival of the social organism which has adopted it than the harder, scientific alternative of finding out how Neture really works, since a more important factor in evolution may be cooperation and simultaneous action. It may be better to act decisively in the wrong direction than for us all to depart in different directions or to do nothing. If the creationists did not threaten other people's survival (by allowing them lass than the best understanding of scientific knowledge) we could leave them to be dealt with by time. Such anti-rational movements are themselves understandable when one considers how much of what science we know is neglected or misused in the conduct of political affairs. Even President Reagan has spoken in favour of creationism, so that unfortunately it is necessary to mount a campaign in favour of true science, which alone can guide us in what to do with our species and our planet. That great statesman Count Oxenstierna (1583 – 1654) said, "You don't know, my boy, with what little reason the world is governed". If our species is to survive we must master evolution, and these books are ell useful towords the end, if only to point out how little we yet know, especially nbout how the larger scale properties of noture result from the fine-grain structure now emerging into the light.

Above the uplands

Redmond O'Hanlon

JOHN BUXTON (Editor)
The Birds of Wiltshire
360p. Trowbridge: Wiltshire Library and Museum Service. £5.50.
0 900080 6

There is a special pleasure to be had in a sustained reading of natural histories of the English counties. A medieval sense of place gradually overtakes one. First the serf confined to his lord's land and unable to walk where he will beyond its perimeter, we begin to look on with envy at the freely travelling men, and the more exotic and unexpected they are the greater the envy they bring with them. Like Gilbert's Tess at Flintcomb Ash, we are occasionally visited, on the Wiltshire Downs, by "strange birds from behind the North Pole . . . gaunt special creatures".

Whether or not they are driven by Gilbert's white pillars of soow cloud, in the blast of a wind which smells of icebergs, and seas, whales and white bears, birds do appear; Arctic skua (regularly), the Arctic skua (rarely), the Iceland gull (in 1973), the snowy owl (1945), the Lapland bunting (1953) and the Snow Bunting (three times this century). I well remember when I was at school, the great Northern Diver, which came in one winter across a white countryside obliterated by weeks of snow, oo the winding, glistening, half-frozen, river-like black strip of the Old Bath Road. He arrived outside the school, but a step from the iron gates of our enclosure; and we regarded his long sleek head, his small unteiling eye and his great bill (which appeared above the apple box provided for his comfort) with a silent awe. It is some relief, all these years later, to have the size of one's reaction officially approved – because his appearance and, after convalescence, his departure, via a successful take-off from Wilton Water, are commemorated in this very book.

But, for the old, slow man with his horse and cart who must have been oea of the last day-labourers left in Wiltshire, and who, when I was a child, used to come past our bousa every morning oo his way to the farm by the sand-pits near Calne, the gulls were enough. "When them white birds'ere about", he would tell ma, "the sea's flooded out."

But very few people can know this feeling better than John Boxton. As Emeritus Fellow of New College, and Reader in English Literature at Oxford until 1979, the best-known of his books is probably *Elizabethan Taste* (1963); but the best known to me are certainly *Island of Skomer* (1950) which he wrote with his brether-in-law, R.M. Lockley, and his brillant monograph in the Collins New Naturalist series on *The Redstart* (1950). Taken prisoner by the Germans at the very beginning of the war on a Commaodo raid into Norway, Buxton's coocentrated behavioural studies began in April 1941:

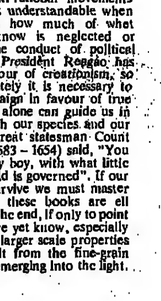
> soow was falling, as it had been for the past three days, when the first cock redstart came into the patch which we auphemistically called "the lower garden", and perched on the high retaining wall of the Palace, our prison. Since this wall (which was inscribed with the oame HIERONYMUS) was nearly vertical and was facing away from the wind, no snow clung there, and tha redstart perhaps fouod some insects sheltering in its craonies. . . .

Buxtoo was joined behind the wall by George Waterston, who worked on the wryneck, and by Peter Conder, the future director of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, whose ornithological career began under their tutorship.

The Redstart to Wiltshire, mindful of Buxton's past attentions and well-built nest boxes, still enjoys studying the odd behaviour patterns of soldiers: "In spite of continuing changes in the habitat and disturbance by military activities, one or two pairs still breed in Imber village. (This demonstrates remarkable fidelity by the species to a particular site.)" And Geoffrey Webber's excellent notes also tell us that Buxton's other love, lodging by the number of learned papers he has lavished upon it, the Oyster catcher, which paid only two recorded visits to Wiltshire in the last 150 years, has now taken to dropping in (tweoty recent calls) on an old friend.

There is a delightfully strong sense of an oral traditioe in this scholarly book, of news pessing from parish to parish across the chalk and the cheese country, of the large interest of small events: in 1916, old so-and-so's dog kills a week-old curlew chick near Tidworth (the first breeding record); at Sutton Benger in 1849 someone almost "found" one; the geography and geology of the downs, the open waters (all man-made), the rivers, and the marsby areas of the Pewsey Vale, by Beatrice Gilliam; oo the woodlands (Hampt-worth Common, Savemake Forest, Spye Pork) by David Rice; and ornithological discussions of the Cotswold Water Park, the Bristol Avon, Salisbury Plain (including a description of a Hen Harrier roost – up to five of these great birds will come flooting out of the dusk each avening and drop into an otherwise small and unspectacular patch of long grass), the Salisbury Avon, and the Vale of Wardour, by Geoffrey Snowball, John Buxton, John Goyett, Martio Peers and Jack Major.

Photographs of typical habitats, distribution maps of all the breeding species, an index and a bibliography which includes the Bowood Estate Game Books, the Longford Castle Game Books, and the "Notes by Rev. George Marsh in his interleaved copy of Yarrell's History of British Birds, in the British Museum (Natural History) at Tring" complete this exemplary guide.



downs the stock dove moves in to army target vehicles. But the merlin still hunts across the Plain in winter and the hobby still breeds there in the summer.

There are fine articles on Wiltshire ornithologists by Ruth Barnes ("John Legg, led a secluded life and died young. *The History of British Birds* which he claims to have written was never published and has never been found"), on the geography and geology of the downs, the open waters (all man-made), the rivers, and the marsby areas of the Pewsey Vale, by Beatrice Gilliam; oo the woodlands (Hampt-worth Common, Savemake Forest, Spye Pork) by David Rice; and ornithological discussions of the Cotswold Water Park, the Bristol Avon, Salisbury Plain (including a description of a Hen Harrier roost – up to five of these great birds will come floating out of the dusk each avening and drop into an otherwise small and unspectacular patch of long grass), the Salisbury Avon, and the Vale of Wardour, by Geoffrey Snowball, John Buxton, John Goyett, Martio Peers and Jack Major.

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Feeding the free mind

Erik de Mauny

GERALD MANSELL

Let Truth Be Told: 50 Years of BBC External Broadcasting

300pp. Waidenfeld and Nicolson. £16.50.
0 297 78158 8

To most people who have spent any time there, to work for the BBC is not simply a job but a vocation; and if this accurately reflects the atmosphere in the Corporation as a whole, it is especially true of the BBC External Services, that unofficial League of Nations occupying Bush House in the Strand. Gerard Mansell was Managing Director of the External Services for nine years until his retirement in 1980, so he is admirably placed to tell the full story, which he has done not only by making a careful scrutiny of the vast mass of documentation available, but by consulting many of the leading figures who have helped to give the BBC's overseas broadcasts their distinctive shape and unmistakable authority. But above all, his book is a celebration of a particular *esprit de corps*, in times good and bad, in a part of the Corporation more vulnerable than most to the vagaries, vacillations and demands for economy of successive British Governments.

The present World Service of the BBC had its beginnings in the development of short-wave radio in the 1920s, and the launching in 1932, under Sir John Reith as Director-General, of the Empire Service. This had been Reith's idea, but he had to fight for five years to bring it about, and without his foresight and granite determination, it might have been much further delayed: there were not only technical difficulties and lack of adequate finance, but timidity and misgivings in many high quarters. It was not until six years later, in 1938, that the Corporation entered the field of foreign-language broadcasts, with the inauguration of the Arabic and Latin American Services. In the preceding months, to counter the increasing propaganda of the Fascist dictatorships, the Foreign Office had given thought to starting its own foreign-language broadcasts. It was by the power of his personality and his tactical skill that Reith persuaded the Government that the BBC was far better suited to carry out that task. He thus preserved the BBC's independence, and at the same time laid down certain guide-lines: that the Corporation must always speak with one voice, in its broadcasts at home and abroad, and that it must always present news of world developments truthfully, impartially and objectively, even when certain developments might run contrary to the national interest. Those principles remain valid today, even though at times – most notoriously during the Suez operation – the Corporation has come under severe government pressure to modify its attitude.

Mr Mansell devotes several chapters to the BBC's role in the Second World War, and vividly conveys the drama surrounding it. This was, indeed, the Corporation's finest hour, and one which saw a rapid and vast expansion of its foreign-language broadcasts, aimed simultaneously at confounding the enemy, bringing hope and comfort to the peoples of Occupied Europe, and persuading the uncommitted countries of the justice of Britain's cause. By the time the war in Europe ended, it was putting out more than 850 hours e week in forty-five languoges.

It is self-evident that any broadcasting organization is only as good as the people who run it, and Mansell's narrative is studded with neatly etched portraits of some of the more brilliant exponents of the art: men like Sir John Beresford Clark, Sir Ian Jacob, Noel Newsome, Darsie Gillie, J. A. Camacho, Sir Hugh Greene and R. E. Gregson, to name only a few. They sometimes had their problems inside the Corporation, but the major threat invariably came from outside, from that "death by a thousand cuts" by which successive governments have regularly confronted the External Services. It is symptomatic of official penny-pinching that in 1981 the present Conservative Government decided that the Spanish, Italian and Maltese Services must be dropped. Less than a year later, the Falklands conflict with the Spanish-speaking Argentine erupted.

From the government side, there has been a persisting heresy (the word is not too strong) that Britain need not broadcast to her friends, only to her enemies. Yet, time and again, crises have broken out where least expected, and where Britain's voice was most needed. It is eloquent proof of the sound foundations laid by Raith that the BBC should have emerged from so many crises with its authority undimmed: from Suez, from the bitter polemics of the Cold War, from Rhodesian UDI and from the recent Falklands episode. Yet, as Mansell shows, successive official reports have been more concerned to hamstring the External Services than to help them in their task.

The BBC's mission to present the news truthfully and impartially has not, of course, endeared it to all its listeners. It has, for example, regularly come under attack from the Soviet Union, as may be shown by a brief extract from *Komsomolskaya Pravda*: "'White' propaganda is straightforward propaganda. It is waged by the enemies of communism quite openly, even though under the mantle of 'impartiality' and 'objectivity'. But this does not lessen its hostile nature." With that kind of back-handed compliment, the BBC may feel reasonably satisfied with itself. In fact, Moscow Radio paid it a more open one only a year or so ago, by inaugurating its own "World Service", its format closely modelled on that of the BBC.

There is one reproach (apart from a few minor misprints) to which Mansell lays himself open, and that is of a certain imbalance. In other words, he has devoted some nine-tenths of his book to the first thirty years of the External Services, so that the events of the past two decades are mainly crowded into a final chapter. It is true that he does touch on the recurring problems of broadcasting to the Communist countries. Yet the saga of the BBC's dealings with Moscow and other East European capitals could well have furnished a complete chapter of its own. Perhaps one day it will form the subject of a separate study. On the other hand, after so many instances of government parsimony, one can only give a staunch endorsement to Mr Mansell's closing sentences:

> The conclusion, that there has somehow to be an end to the repeated questioning and uncertainty . . . is inescapable. This is a matter for government. A few years ago a distinguished American foreign correspondent coined a phrase to describe the role which the External Services have come to play. They are to the free mind, he said, what Oxfam is to the hungry. It was a description which was liked at Bush House. It seemed to say it all.

Long entanglement

Denis Judd

GEOFFREY MOORHOUSE

India Britannica

288pp. Harvill Press. £12.95.
0 00 216662 3

The close British association with India lasted for nearly four hundred years. It had humble commercial origins, but in a little over two centuries the East India Company had become the paramount power, and by 1877 Queen Victoria had been proclaimed Queen-Empress. On February 28, 1948, the last British troops, the 1st Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry, left Indian soil and the most complex and long-standing of Britain's imperial entanglements came to a formal to an end.

Geoffrey Moorhouse has set himself the almost impossible task of describing this broad historical process, as well as briefly analysing both sides' post-imperial attitudes, in a mere 269 pages. The book is handsomely illustrated and well produced. It must also be said that Mr Moorhouse writes well, and, as the author of a warmly-received book on Calcutta, with some authority.

Inevitably there are problems in a survey of this sort. A good deal is skoted over, and there are inadequate explanations of several of the great episodes of Indian history. Much has also been omitted, including any mention in the text of at least two Viceroys – Lord Reading (who from 1922-26 seemed to have destroyed Gandhi's hold over the nationalist movement), and Lord Northbrook. Burma, part of the Indian Empire for half a century, is mentioned on only four occasions.

On balance, though, the author should be congratulated more for what he has managed to include than criticized for what he has left out. He has produced a very readable and competent introduction to the history of British India, and one that is full of telling phrases. Thus General Dyer, perpetrator of the Amritsar massacre, is dismissed as "an ailing old sweat, suffering from arteriosclerosis and the bronchial effects of chain-smoking"; Kipling "in the exclusively Indian setting of his late adolescence" showed responses which "were strikingly those of a capable journalist, detached enough to be critical of or sympathetic to rulers and ruled alike, but far less concerned with motive, than with symptoms and activity"; Attlee was "a tough-minded, underrated man", etc.

Moorhouse is particularly perceptive when he evaluates the legacy of the relationship between Britain and India, remarking that when he first arrived in the sub-continent "in the midst of its strangeness and its towering scale of people and events, there was a haunting familiarity awaiting an Englishman there . . . My people had marked India to a degree that startled me, and India had marked us." Among the varied legacies of British rule is the eccentric splendour of Bombay railway station, the world's biggest cricket crowds, and a (just) recognizable Westminster-style of democracy. The British have absorbed nearly a thousand words from Indian languages, hundreds of thousands of sub-continental immigrants, and a host of imperial memories – fading tokens of a raj that surpassed all others in its scale and complexity.

Losing streak

José Harris

KEITH ROBBINS

The Eclipse of a Great Power: Modern Britain 1870–1975

408pp. Longman. £14.95 (paperback, £7.50).
0 582 48971 7

This book concludes with the confession that its title is "not self-evidently appropriate" – an admission that confirmed my mounting suspicion over the previous three hundred and forty-two pages that the author had never really made up his mind what he was trying to say. The writing of "recent history", of "total history", and of readable textbooks are of course all notoriously difficult: and it may well be that in trying to do all three simultaneously Keith Robbins has set himself an impossible task. One major problem is that the sheer volume of recorded historical facts since 1870 is so vast that no book which attempts to survey them comprehensively can ever be more than hopelessly superficial. Another is that there is no necessary congruity in the time-structures appropriate to different spheres of history; thus 1901, 1931 and 1956, which Professor Robbins identifies as major turning-points, may make sense in the context of foreign policy and economics, but they have no special significance in religion, sport, culture and the history of ideas. Another problem is that explaining the rise and fall of empires is a theme so complex as to be virtually outside the scope of positivistic history. Even Gibbon ultimately reached the melancholy conclusion that he had started at the wrong point. All these problems are compounded by the fact that, as Robbins modestly admits, he has on offer no particular interpretation of the past hundred years of British history. "The empire was gained and lost, but "it is still not clear why it happened". The "eclipse of a great power" is carefully logged, but nowhere adequately explained.

In spite of these shortcomings this is not a book without value. There are certain topics – such as foreign policy, religion, and the presence or absence of national identity, on which Robbins writes very well indeed. His analysis of the ebb and flow of Britain's relationship with Europe is at all points lucid and convincing. Scots, Welsh and Irish questions are rescued from the twilight and given their proper status in a book about the history of "Britain". Twentieth-century Christianity – "full of confused life rather then moribund" – receives the serious treatment it deserves, though as a subject in its own right rather than as a factor which explains Britain's secular decline. There are some interesting stories about footballers, though even a soccer-phobe like myself finds it hard to see how they can be blamed for Britain's loss of global power (unless as an echo of bread and circuses). It is worthy of note that religion in Britain still outstrips football as an active spectator sport – attendance at churches far exceeding attendance at football matches, even in that latter's peak year of popularity.

Other themes are handled much less satisfactorily. Robbins acknowledges the "poverty" of his discussion of the history of science, and indeed cites his own ignorance in this field as evidence for the existence of "two cultures". But his breathless rush through art, literature and music is no more adequate – in fact made worse by a series of desperate and ghastly puns ("*Hair* was one of the first things to be let down"; "to be summoned by Betjeman . . . is to be presented with a varied feast"). There is frequent mention of the reorganization and reform of government, but no explanation of how government actually worked when it was not being reformed. Wider social themes such as demographic change, family structure, social mobility and relationships between the sexes are virtually if not wholly ignored. The erection and demolition of the Cutteslow walls predictably appear as reified symbols of English class divisions – though not the most interesting aspect of those walls, which is that the solid Georgian dwellings on the council side were so much more attractive than the tatty pebble-dashed semis on the private estate. Transient reference is made to Oxford philosophy, high culture, Nobel prizewinners and immigrant Jewish intellectuals; but if anyone had an original thought in Britain between 1870 and 1975 it cannot be found in this book. No attempt is made to assess the tendentious, unsound, but immensely challenging general interpretations of modern British history advanced in recent years by Keith Middlemas and Martin Wiener.

Such omissions are perhaps inevitable in a work of such ambitious scope, but they do tend to undermine its value as an advanced textbook and compendium of recent scholarly debate. At the risk of sounding old-fashioned I found myself wishing that Professor Robbins had resisted the bear-hug of total history and concentrated on a more limited analysis of internal and external high politics. In these areas his scholarship is surefooted, his judgment impeccably fair-minded, his insight often profound.

Far from downhearted

Paul Smith

JILL DROWER

Good Clean Fun: The story of Britain's first holiday camp

63pp. Arcadia Books. £5.95.
0 95083440 8

Hard on the heels of Billy Butlin's autobiography comes this attractively produced assertion, by his great-granddaughter, of Joseph Cunningham's claim to be regarded as the originator of the holiday camp, a generation before Butlin entered the field. After losing his job as superintendent of a lads' institute in Toxteth, Cunningham made a flourishing business out of the summer camps he and his wife had been running for the boys. The International Young Men's Holiday Camp established on the Isle of Man in 1895 was by the 1930s accommodating some 60,000 visitors a year and making an average annual profit of £37,000 with its two-guinea-a-week holidays.

The ingredients were very much those Butlin was to employ, a combination of carefully regulated informality and fun with the sort of communal amenities that only expensive hotels could rival, something less spartan than ordinary camping ("no 'roughing it'" insisted one of Cunningham's early advertisements) and less confined than the usual boarding-house. Cunningham's provided as much food as you could eat (including Manx kippers served with jam), indoor and outdoor sports, a heated swimming-pool, a palm-court, and a professional orchestra to play during meals. As a less boisterous and more sophisticated kind of customer arrived after the First World War, it added wireless concerts, a cinema, and a soda fountain, and tents gave way to bungalows and dormitories. To enjoy all this you had to meet the founder's Presbyterian specifications. Intoxicants, gambling and improper language were not allowed, and there were fines for not being back in your tent by midnight. You also had to be male, though by the 1920s women were queueing at the gates for the camp dances. Enforcement of these disciplines became less rigorous as time went on, and no one seems to have minded much. "Are we downhearted?" was the camp cry. Few but the aliens interned there during the First World War would have failed to return the ritual "No!"

Jill Drower's brief account is worth having for the copious and evocative illustrations alone, and touches on many details of interest to the social historian. Inevitably there are questions one would like to find more systematically tackled. The economics of Cunningham's business deserve closer analysis. He seems to have relied largely on the low capital cost of the accommodation he provided. Not only were bis hell-tents cheap, but as they were not permanent structures most of the site was treated for rating purposes as agricultural land. This enabled him to provide public amenities of a standard his clients could not normally have afforded, and to take his wife on winter cruises in their steam yacht on the proceeds. It would be interesting to know more about the customers. Many of them are said to have come from industrial Lancashire and Yorkshire. The social range seems to have been wide. A camper in 1936 found himself living with "a Government official, a clerk, a shipyard worker and a University man". The photographs and the satisfied client who, booking a fortnight in "that delectable home of Bohemianism", voted "the old Camp" to be "facile princeps", suggest that white-collar as much as the manual worker. What had begun in 1895 among the boys of the Liverpool slums ended in a commercial venture necessarily geared to those well above the poverty line. They look to be relishing it, "Mayer's Greenhorns", "The Nomads", "Farmyard Sweeties", posing with boaters, watch-chains, stiff collars in front of their impractable people with a capacity for enjoying themselves together not eroded by the dead weight of consumer durables and the soporific screen.

The cult of inwardness

Edward Timms

GERALD CHAPPLE and HANS H. SCHULTE (Editors)

The Turn of the Century: German Literature and Art, 1890–1915

456pp. 18 black-and-white plates. Bonn: Bouvier. DM 138.

What is the distinctively German contribution to European art and literature at the turn of the century? The answer suggested by this volume is that it was inwardness: the poet living in an "age of prose" turned away from social reality to explore the "spiritual condition of man" (as Erich Heller argues in an introductory paper on Rilke). What he found there was not serenity, but anxiety and dread – what William J. Brazill, in his summing-up of the whole symposium, calls "the experience of terror in the face of nothingness". The artistic and indeed existential imperative was to create meaning where none was socially given, since the traditional cultural consensus had broken down.

This collection of twenty-five papers by different hands shows how rich and diverse was the response: the sexual psychology of Freud and Weininger, the aesthetics of Worringer and Kandinsky, the romantic spiritualism of Meister Eckhart and Karl May (which the young Hitler so greatly admired), the painting and poetry of Kokoschka, Klee and Trakl, the various artistic developments from the Berlin and Vienna Secession through Arts and Crafts to Arp and Dada, the aceptical vision of Viennese writers and critics like Schnitzler, Musil, Kraus, Loos and Wittgenstein, the theatre of Max Reinhardt and the cabaret which flourished in the Munich of Wedekind and Thomas Mann. From this range of subjects, viewed from a variety of angles, a certain consensus emerges. The transition from the old century to the new was conceived in Germany in terms not of continuity and renewal, but of radical disjunction with apocalyptic undertones.

This book illustrates the value of an interdisciplinary approach to literature and the visual arts. The interaction between different art forms is the subject of several of the most suggestive papers: the influence of Wagner's music on Kokoschka's visual symbolism (analysed by Donald E. Gordon), the links between Kandinsky, Trakl and Arp (by Christa Baumann and Harriet Watts), the affinities between Loos's designs and Wittgenstein's linguistic theory (by Dagmar Barnouw). With its wealth of illustrations and wide range of scholarly articles, this volume will be an asset to any library, although it is priced beyond the pocket of the individual purchaser.

The approach also has its limitations. It tends to locate artistic activity in a self-sufficient aesthetic realm which engenders new forms from within. Arp's poems are presented as "verbalizations" of Kandinsky's visual motifs (Harriet Watts). And a Dada poem (according to Friedhelm Lach) comes into existence as a result of "free artistic play" with existing literary models. What is lacking is a clear recognition that even the most self-absorbed artist is also responding to social pressures. Arp and the Dadaists were living through the First World War. Heller's Hegelian approach to Rilke sets the poet in context. It is true that during the 1890s German writers moved away from the direct engagement with society which had characterized Naturalism. But this inwardness itself was socially conditioned. It is misleading to speak of alienation and dread as if they were simply existential categories. They also become a response to social oppression.

William Brazill gives us a glimpse of the social pressures which contributed to the cult of inwardness. A society still in the grip of a reactionary ruling class was at the same time committed to dynamic industrial modernization. But what is lacking is a more specific account of how this contradiction impinged on individual sensibilities: through authoritarian families and highly sexist social roles, through bureaucratized schools and universities, compulsory military service, through career choices which lay between bureaucratic routine and the treadmill of journalism. The accounts we have of German schools in this period are particularly harrowing: from the Prussianized grammar-schools described by Thomas Mann and Georg Heym to the Austrian military academies of Rilke and Musil. The patriarchal family leaves an equally indelible imprint, from the case histories of Freud through to Kafka and the Expressionists. When we take full measure of these factors, and of the way they shape artistic discourse, the aesthetics of inwardness emerge as a displaced form of social protest.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the representation of sexuality. Why did sexual themes loom so large in German art and writing around 1900? This question is raised in a particularly challenging paper on Freud and the "Quarrel over Bisexuality" (by Peter Heller). The answer suggested is that this preoccupation with sex had Judaic sources, in the concept of circumcision as a "compact between man and God" which treats the sexual as "symbolic territory". Peter Heller suggests that this "symbolic" view of sex became extended to more general social relations in this period. Sex became a symbol for relations of subjection and domination, or a means of allaying social anxiety. For a generation uncertain of its identity in a rapidly changing society, Freud's theories offered an escape into a sexualized "inner domain".

These suggestive but rather abstract hypotheses leave the fundamental question unresolved. Perhaps it can only be answered by a more comparative and rigorously historical approach. Why was sexuality such an obsessive theme in Germany and Austria, while in this same period it scarcely surfaces in public discourse in England? Reading letters and memoirs of the Edwardian period, one is left with the impression that English middle-class intellectuals lived in a sexually neutralized atmosphere. Habituation to all-male company, at public school or Oxbridge, in the professions and the London clubs, created a social and emotional decorum in which the female sex was relatively invisible. Of course, there were homosexual undercurrents. But the punitive legislation of the period, and particularly the moralistic reaction after Oscar Wilde's trial, ensured that they remained beneath the surface.

In Germany and Austria, by contrast, sexuality belonged to the public domain. Memoirs of the period recall the army of prostitutes, almost as numerous as the soldiers themselves, who paraded the streets of German cities and Austrian garrison towns. And the discourse of avant-garde writers and artists was dominated by images of sexual conflict: Wedekind's elemental antagonism between Lulu and Jack the Ripper, Weininger's insistence on Male and Female as incompatible principles, Kokoschka's image of love as war-to-the-death (in his plays) or at best an uneasy truce (in his pictures), Heinrich Mann's "Blue Angel" revenge vengeance on society, Klimt's *femmes fatales* and the threateningly erotic walls portrayed by Schiele, the links between sadism and sexuality in Musil's stories, Hofmannsthal's hysterical Elektra and the diseased erotichism of Thomas Mann's Aschenbach, Kraus's portrayal of the prostitute as the great adversary of male morality and Schnitzler's insistence on the affinity between love and death. Freud was truly the presiding genius of this generation, with his image of sexual relations governed by penis envy on the one hand and castration anxiety on the other. Sexuality is pictured not just as a "symbolic field", but as a field of combat. What is lacking is any sense of tenderness in relationships between the sexes. Even Rilke's quest is for a release from sexuality, like an arrow released from a bow. The only author who finds words for tenderness is (perhaps significantly) a woman, Else Lasker-Schüler.

What social factors shaped these images of sexual warfare? One answer must lie with the easy availability of prostitutes. Since emotional relationships were so constrained within the bourgeois class, sensitive young men found their first sexual experiences in the arms of whores. This helps to explain the blend of irresistible fascination and horrified dread with which sexuality is invested by Weininger and Kafka, Trakl and Schiele. These anxieties were heightened by the knowledge that certain forms of venereal disease might lead to paralysis and imbecility. And in the background lurked the myths associated with Nietzsche, which suggested that heightened mental states might only be obtained at the price of disease and insanity.

The existential dread with which certain writers invest sexuality thus has all-too-human sources. But this does not fully explain the pervasive sense of female sexuality as a *threat* to male identity. The contest for this symbolic territory has political and ideological overtones. The concept of "masculinity" invoked by many avant-garde writers seems to have been profoundly shaped by the Wilhelmine ethos which they claimed to despise. The cult of "male" intellectual rigour and self-discipline was a displacement of prevailing concepts of virility on to a cultural plane. Political conflicts were being fought out in terms of sexual distinctions. One of the few critical campaigns which shook the authority of Kaiser Wilhelm II was the revelation that homosexual practices were widespread among members of his entourage. The charge of bisexuality undermined an ideological order in which males were securely on top and submissive females were supposed to lie back and think of new recruits for the Kaiser's army. The daring raids made into sexual territory by German writers and artists of this period paradoxically served to reinforce the prevailing assumptions about virility. It is important to relate the writing of this period to the imperial ethos which it obliquely reflects (Thomas Mann's hero was Frederick the Great).

It is also important to take account of an emergent generation of women writers who were beginning to question the patriarchal order: it is extraordinary that the volume under review should make no reference to the women writers who became prominent in Germany at the turn of the century: Bertha von Suttner, Lily Braun, Gabriele Reuter, Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Lou Andreas-Salome, Else Lasker-Schüler.

The dominating presence in German public life was of course the Kaiser. This is rightly emphasized by two contributions to this volume which are historically more firmly grounded. Gisela Brude-Firnau analyses the rhetoric of the Kaiser's public speeches, showing how potently he blended nationalism with religiosity. And Marion F. Deshmukh, writing on "Art and Politics in Berlin", shows how heavily the Kaiser's shadow fell on other fields of cultural expression. These two papers actually undermine the notion propounded elsewhere that the artists of this generation withdrew into a realm of "inwardness". Their art (for all Kandinsky's pronouncements) did not form an "autonomous realm", but was inextricably entangled with contemporary life. This became clear to everyone after August 1914, when with few exceptions the aesthetes of the 1890s contributed poems in praise of the war effort. For many of them the war seemed to be the fulfilment of their subjective vision – liberation from a stifingly oppressive society or confirmation of their visions of incipient chaos. It is misleading to conclude that the art of this generation was created "with no point of reference other than the self" (William Brazill). Their art reflects a society which systematically frustrated self-fulfilment.

An untitled gouache on paper by the French artist Robert Eugène Pougheon (1886–1955), which will be included in Christie's sale of Art Nouveau and Art Deco paintings, glass, ceramics and objets d'art at the Hôtel Richemond, Geneva on May 8.

The unbookish Brotherhood

William Vaughan

QUENTIN BELL

A New and Noble School: The Pre-Raphaelites

192pp. Macdonald. £10.95.
0 356 085 46 5

For most twentieth-century commentators, the Pre-Raphaelite painters have posed a teaser. They lie on the fringes of aesthetic respectability. As a breakaway group that defied the official standards of their day they have their place in the history of the avant-garde. Yet their anecdotal and moralizing tendencies, and their naively literal realism, have little to do with the canons of the modern movement. Furthermore their present popular appeal seems to be closely connected to the sentimental taste for Victoriana that has increased as our own social and economic problems have become more intractable.

One outcome of this situation has been the nature of the literature produced on the Pre-Raphaelites. There have been some distinguished specialist studies: but far more common are the general picture books and gossipy biographies. It is symptomatic of the unease felt about the aesthetic status of the Pre-Raphaelites that anecdotes should predominate over analysis in the accounts of them. The way that these are presented is revealing too. Incidents that would be related with sympathy if they occurred in the life of a "great" artist are given the vaudeville treatment if they happen to a Pre-Raphaelite. Biographers have written movingly about the poverty of Van Gogh. But few have been inclined to express concern for Holman Hunt when he was short of cash. Quentin Bell describes him on one such occasion as being "on his uppers".

Despite this, Professor Bell does not use humour and narrative to mask the problems posed by the Pre-Raphaelites. He draws attention to the incompleteness of the scholarly record of their art and claims no more for his own book than that it is "a fairly unsystematic collection of things that seem to me worth saying about the Pre-Raphaelites". In saying this he does himself an injustice. He is far too accomplished a writer to present the public with a mere bran-tub miscellany of observations. In fact the book is well organized, covering in three broad chapters the origins of the Brotherhood, its early flowering, and the later movement that developed around Rossetti after the initial group had disbanded. But Bell's disclaimer does enable him to adopt a relaxed, engaging and witty form of discourse. It also encourages him to treat many of the common assertions about the Pre-Raphaelites with refreshing irreverence. There is a serious purpose behind this. He wishes to see the Pre-Raphaelites first and foremost as painters. This involves him in a dilemma. He comes (as he tells us) from a generation brought up to dismiss the Pre-Raphaelites as bad art. He has long since ceased to believe this. Yet he cannot wholly abandon the aesthetic tenets of his youth. He therefore seeks to account for the Pre-Raphaelites in terms of pure pictorial values.

In the course of this quest he gives short shrift to any claims that the art of the Pre-Raphaelites owes anything essential to the influence of critics and theorists. "Books, in studios", he comments, . . . are apt to be incorporated in still-lives, or they prop up a table when one of its legs fails to reach the floor, and sometimes they are used for kindling fires." He therefore finds it unlikely that the writings of Ruskin were of crucial importance for them. Similarly he believes they owed remarkably little to the Nazarenes – that brotherhood of German artists who had emulated the values of medieval art decades earlier – since the pictorial styles of the two groups are dissimilar. He discovers a hero in Millais. Dismissing the view of this artist as a "kind of glorious ventriloquist'a dummy, repeating, magnifying, embellishing the thoughts of others" he draws attention to the positive and original qualities of his masterful early paintings. Without the expertise of such a painter, he concludes, Pre-Raphaelitism would never have got off the ground.

It would be easy enough to present counter-arguments, to suggest ways in which Ruskin's influence was vital, demonstrate Pre-Raphaelite responses and reactions to the art of the Nazarenes, or claim that Millais was dependant upon the intellectual and imaginative stimulus provided by Hunt and Rossetti when achieving his greatest works. But to do so would, I think, be to take issue with symptoms rather than causes. The central point is that Professor Bell appears to believe that there is a world of pictorial practice that flourishes on its own, removed from the world of ideas. "Pictures are not made with ideas, they are made with paint", he proclaims. Much of what he has to say about the Pre-Raphaelites will stand or fall according to the extent to which his reader can accept such a division. For those who cannot his book will still have a lot to offer – not least as a reminder of the problems involved in assessing the Pre-Raphaelites and as an exhortation not to avoid them.

The light and the dark

Angela Leighton

MARGARET KIRKHAM
Jane Austen: Feminism and Fiction
187pp. Brighton: Harvester. £18.95.
0 7108 0468 7

P. J. M. SCOTT
Jane Austen: A Reassessment
208pp. Vision. £11.95.
0 85478 494 2

Each new book about Jane Austen makes its claims to be original against increasing odds. Yet originality is a mark of both of these new critical works, in different ways. Margaret Kirkham's *Jane Austen: Feminism and Fiction* is a scholarly, readable and often adventurous interpretation of Austen's fiction. She argues that Jane Austen is neither a limited miniaturist of social behaviour nor a reactionary conservative, but an Enlightenment feminist. She claims that Austen consciously aligns herself with a tradition of feminism which stresses the rational and moral equality of women, and that the anti-Romantic flavour of her novels derives from this allegiance. Her claim is supported by a long and detailed account of the development of feminism in the eighteenth century, its relation to the "mixed character" debate of Fielding and Richardson and its final articulation in the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. "As a feminist moralist," she writes, "Jane Austen is in agreement with Wollstonecraft on so many points that it seems unlikely she had not read *Vindication*." Such an agreement is based on the common assumption of these two writers that "women share the same moral nature as men, ought to share the same moral status, and exercise the same responsibility for their own conduct."

The book contains an interpretation of Jane Austen which is general enough to override niggling questions of proof about her reading, and contains documentary material that is interesting and informative in its own right. Having discussed at some length the historical importance of Enlightenment feminism, Margaret Kirkham gives a salutary critique of the early biographies of Austen, showing how their protestations of piety and respectability were deliberate strategies to dissociate her from the scandalous notoriety of Mary Wollstonecraft. Her analysis of individual novels then emphasizes the moral independence of the heroines, and dwells in particular on the influence of Kotzebue's Romantic dramas which provide the measure of Jane Austen's different ideals of moral responsibility and good sense. Austen's presentation of her heroines is in the tradition of Enlightenment feminism because it seeks to match in them intelligence and feeling, and makes women the central moral agents of the works.

Such an approach to Austen's novels is persuasive, but also, at times, familiar. It could be argued that Kirkham has brought the new name of Enlightenment feminism to a rather old interpretation of the novels as finely-balanced and highly moral. On the few occasions when she risks a more playful, textual criticism, her remarks are intriguing but a little forced. She suggests, for instance, that there might be a connection between Fanny Price's surname and a passage in Wollstonecraft's *Maria* where "the heroine's husband says 'that every woman had her price'", and elsewhere she links the title of *Mansfield Park* to a famous slavery case, claiming that Fanny's "moral status in England is implicitly contrasted yet also compared with that of the Antiguan slaves". However, in general the interest and value of this book lie in its more temperate, historical documentation, and in its interpretation of Jane Austen's feminism as an informing moral consciousness rather than a private literary allusion.

P. J. M. Scott's *Jane Austen: A Reassessment* opens with the promise to be "a reading of Austen's work which is different from those hitherto expounded – sometimes drastically different". This different reading broadly presents Jane Austen as a writer who looks upon the dark side of human character and human society, and whose view of the world is disaffected, pessimistic and savage. According to Scott, these novels are "continuous *exposés* of the world as a theatre of myopic egotists". The delightfulness of the heroines merely serves as a foil to this pervading social *malaise*. Thus *Northanger Abbey* "is redolent of a suppressed disenchantment with everything", and *Emma* "is essentially a nasty book", and its snobbish, meddling heroine a villain who escapes even Jane Austen's censure. "Maybe", Scott speculates, "it was a bank holiday trip for her very intelligence, a sort of ethical blow-out."

This emphasis on the dark side of Jane Austen's fiction is conveyed with the intensity of a personal crusade, and the book as a whole is curiously and unashamedly personal. The author misses no opportunity to confide his own opinions and experiences to the reader. His avowed anti-biographical approach to Jane Austen, on the grounds that critics habitually "festoon themselves with a whole tangle of obfuscating material which obscures rather than leading into the works' finest intuitions", clearly does not apply to his own work, which is heavy with the life and beliefs of its author. He tells us, for instance, about his father's and mother's differing responses to social rudeness, and his own which is to "give a sickly grin and limp away". He disabuses Freud of his theory that children are incapable of jokes by referring to "the 4-, 5- and 6-year-olds I have known", and establishes his personal acquaintance with the elder Musgroves of *Persuasion* when he declares that "there can be little meeting of minds when one talks to them". As a general reflection on Jane Austen he advises the reader to "Think of the beatific *gentillesse*, the delicacy of a light that never was on sea or land, the heart-broken, heart-breaking gratitude and the cool, calm, relaxed quite un-selfconscious ferocity which alternates through the Magnificat; or through the sayings and life of its speaker's Son." Scott's irresistible wish to talk about other things certainly ensures that Jane Austen herself remains shadowy and anonymous by comparison.

It is difficult, given the constant interruptions and divagations, to recapture the precise nature of Scott's Reassessment. His argument tends either to be broken by personal confidences and tangential meditations, or else obscured by a mercilessly gymnastic style. He writes, for instance, that in *Northanger Abbey*

> Austen is not evolving a profound, or even fairly interesting, fable on the theme of the gap between the worlds of art and the life outside them, eg the real dangers inherent in too much reliance on the imaginative faculty (? *The Tempest*), the megalomaniac tendency latent in artistry (Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*), art as constituting consciousness in its most valuable aspects (Proust) or any other theme of remotely equivalent import.

A book on Jane Austen for the Critical Studies Series cannot, I think, cater for the sheer breadth of Scott's preoccupations. Altogether, this book rides from ostentation to inconsequentiality with an abandon which is all the author's own, but which completely eludes the reader's more particular needs.

Monstrously energetic

Jennifer Uglow

NINA AUERBACH
Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth
255pp. Harvard University Press. £12.25.
0 674 95406 8

Nina Auerbach sets out to restore the now much defaced and tarnished Angel in the House to her original glory – indeed to endow her with a power and energy she never knew she had. Auerbach's thesis is that at the heart of Victorian imaginative life lay a form of "woman worship", that once the patriarchical god had vacated his throne, an "explosively mobile magic woman" slid into his place in a disguise such as we find in Leslie Stephen's epistolary prayer to Julia; "You see I have not got any saints and you must not be angry if I put you in the place where my saints used to be."

This heavy disguise is the reason why neither we nor the Victorians recognized that the woman they cherished was not a model of selflessness but a demon, a "monster of ego", a symbol of energy bursting out of the confines of the past and the fetters of the family. One of Auerbach's central tenets is that whether the popular stereotypes show women as conventional and pious wives, ridiculed old maids or outcast prostitutes, they are all images which embody the drive for change, the power to become their own opposite:

> As angel, she is militant rather than nurturing, displacing the God she pretends to serve. As angelic demon, she becomes the source of all shaping and creative power, dropping the mask of humility as she forecasts apocalyptic new orders. As old maid, she simulates meekness while proclaiming that the world is all before her new dispensation. As fallen woman, she spurns meakness for the glory of her own apotheosis.

The book devotes a chapter to each of these "subversive paradigms" and to victims and quasans as illustrative of powerlessness and power and argues that these exemples moulded individual lives just as they did works of literature. The final chaptar, not altogether without effort, allias these symbols of energy in womanhood to the pervasive idealization of fictional character itself, "a vehicle of mobile immortality that leaped free from the imperfections of its text and tha eventual death of its euthor", becomiog "the nineteenth century's most potent vision of humanity made perpetual".

Such large claims, delivered in a fluent and eathusiastic style, bolstered by evidence drawn from novels, painting and biography, set up strange currents of compulsion and repulsion. Reading such a book is like entering a fictional world, governed by its own self-referring rules, where familiar objects suffer a sea-change. The character most at home here, and appealed to constantly, is Lewis Carroll's Alice. It is relatively easy to see her as a type of fallen woman, "of simultaneous majesty and abasement . . . 'Down, down, down', Alice's story begins, 'would the fall *never* come to an end?'." But did the same role really become "so pivotal" to Georga Eliot's life, functioning "as the crucible in which unpromising beginnings were forged into unprecedented triumphs"? And is it really possibla to see Emma Bovary as a "dark Madonna", a mere "parody of Hester Prynne"? The danger of this hermeneutic style of reading, where a hidden coda reverses the surface text, is that ona begins to lose sight of the explicit meaning altogether. Forms and genres become blurred, literature and lifa merge, novels and events become applitical as each example of oppression is seeo as a secret expressioo of power.

When Auerbach pursues har themes in detailed analyses of particular works, she can be very persuasive, as in the studies of *Trilby*, *Dracula* and Freud's case study of "Dora", which demonstrate the way these supposedly passive women metaphorically tower over their male manipulators, or the iconography of the fallen women in the paintings of Egg, Watts and Rossetti in terms not of despair but of rebellion, space and power. Close readings provide some provocative insights, for example the examination of the language of George Eliot's essays on male and female egoism, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists", "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness" in terms of activity and passivity, or the discussion of the tableau in *Adam Bede*, where the pale corpse-like Dinah kisses flushed and sensual Hetty – "the kiss here hints at a more fundamental complicity between purity and fallenness than he (Adam) can understand, as in a subtle sense they drain each others' identities and exchange natures."

Woman and the Demon is most useful in its thoughtful reinterpretation of images of women in familiar works (*The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Villette*, *Henry Esmond*). And it also draws attention to lesser-known writers, like the unjustly neglected journalist, Frances Power Cobbe, and to lesser works like Ellen Wood's *Mildred Arkell* (1865) or Annie Holdsworth's *Joanna Trail, Spinster* (1894). But despite her implicit claim to survey Victorian popular culture as a whole, Auerbach leaves vast areas uncharted, for example comic writing and popular theatre, where melodrama and pantomime might have offared different forms of angelic heroines and powerful dames.

In the introduction she disarms critics by acknowledging that her selection of examples is "representative, not exhaustive" so that "the collaborative reader is urged to cull his or her own demons, fallen women, mermaids and so on, to enhance the paradigms each chapter constructs . . . . Ideally the book that render reads will emerge as a richer portrait than the book I wrote." I dutifully summoned, for example, Gustave Doré's 1867 illustrations to Tennyson's "Guinevere" with their rings of sensual, mermaid-like fairies, and prone guilty queen creeping across a vast expanse of floor at the feat of the upright king. Yet the exercise, although stimulating and enjoyable, also seemed to prove what a partial way of reading this is.

Perhops because one has to cut a way through so much of the dense texture of Victorian literature to arrive at Auerbach's paradigms her book has a curious insubstantiality and many contextual questions remain unanswered. To what extent is the angel/demon therma characteristic of Romantic as wall as late Victorian writers? Is this myth of womanhood the only resonant image of the potent outsider threatening the boundaries set by society? What of the workers, the Jew, the criminal? Is such woman-worship really a peculiarly English phenomenon, as the argument seems to suggest?

Woman and the Demon remains suggestive rather than authoritative. In her enthusiasm Auerbach sweeps over problems and salzes on hints from a wide range of writers (generously acknowledged) to develop her thesis – not only critics interested in mythic pattern (Frye, Knoepflmacher, Welsh) but also feminist historians, critics and theorists (Vicinus, Showalter, Daly). She reinterprets not only the fictions and lives of her chosen period but also its critics, particularly those whom she clearly admires like Virginia Woolf and Hélène Cixous, so that they are made to celebrate with her the eternal energy of character as perpetual metamorphosis" because, "the idea of character has been part of woman's legacy as well as literature's, the very fictionality stating at the unbounded future that includes the power of our unregarded past."

The result is a fascinating book which engages the reader continually, sometimes in excited recognition, sometimes in doubtful rejection, sometimes in downright disagreement. However much one may resist its large claims, there is no doubt that, like its predecessor *Communities of Women*, Auerbach's new book makes us question the relations between art and life, literature and belief.

Sisters and the cloth

Ruth McCurry

SARA MAITLAND
A Map of the New Country: Women and Christianity
218pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £9.95 (paperback, £4.95).
0 7100 9326 8

Feminism and Christianity have long lived side by side and many women have found themselves deeply involved in both; in the United States there have been several attempts to bring the two together and to see what their proponents have to say to each other. But it has been only recently that this discussion has been opened up in Britain, by the publication in 1981 of Susan Dowell and Linda Hurcombe's *Dispossessed Daughters of Eve*, now unfortunately out of print. Sara Maitland's new book is just tha successor that was needed – it is fuller, and weightier; she has had more opportunities for thorough research on both sides of the Atlantic, and she has been able to cover more and different arens.

In a disarmingly personel preface Sara Maitland establishes har feminist credentials; she then proceeds to a businesslike survey of the history of women and the Church – its ideas on, and practice of, ministry, the position of huns, the issue of women's ordoation, the Churches' bureaucracies and religious language and spirituality – which is impressive in its scale and its interdisciplinary competence. Sha does not attempt, as her predecessors did, to apply Christian insights to feminism in return.

The Church has tragically lost much wisdom by undervaluing the contribution that women can make to its ballefs and preaching; the reason for this is explained in the first chapter:

> There now seems to be an emerging consensus that the root of the problem is a very ancieot Christian hareay. Dualism . . . means splitting the wholeness of Ood's creation into divisions labelled "good" and "bad" . . . . Feminist theology preceives that dualistic splits are the cause, not just of sexism, but of racism, classism and ecological destruction.

This idea is well worked out throughout a book which in itself is an attempt to overcome the dualistic division between a womm's beliefs as a Christian and her experience as a woman. Only once does this attempt fail, and dualism reassert itself; on the question of women's ordination. This is the key issuc, the one wblch comes up in connection with every aspect of Christian feminism. Nearly every page of this book illustrates its crucial nature and on nearly every page the case for women's ordination seems powerfully put. The book opens with eleven "scattered incidents from the last twenty years" which "are only some of the more visible signs that women withio Christianity . . . are not only demanding, but are actually achieving, very radical changes in their status". Of these eleven incidents, six are concerned with the ordinatioo of women. Yet on this point the author loses her narve. Suddenly she confesses to her own "conservative' ecclesiology" which does not allow her to believe in women's ordination. In a few pages she goes back on all the rest of her book.

The following chapter, however, on women in the bureaucracies, cannot be praised too highly. Sara Maitlaod opens up a critique that has not been attempted before, putting in a unified context such issues as how the Churches' funds are invested (and whether the Churches should hava investments at all), whether the Church is an equal opportunite employer, why no trade uniog is recognized at Church House. It is in the next chapter, on language and spirituality, the author palots the happiest and most positive picture – of the joy and poetry and humour of women's spirituality, of the sisters' capacity to play and dance, to make pillars out of up-eoded pews and create art out of junk.

One might have bopcd for a bibliography of Christian feminism, but the full notes to each chapter go quite a long way towards it. The book is pleasantly produced, austere in visual style. There are a few misprints, which seem to cluster around the passage on ordination.

The consensus and beyond

John Skorupski

MARTIN HOLLIS and STEVEN LUKES (Editors)
Rationality and Relativism
232p. Oxford: Blackwell. £16.
0 631 127773 9

The study of mentalities and cultures, when conducted in rigorously naturalistic spirit, has always seemed to foster relativism. Yet the connection is diverse. It can equally seem that relativism undermines the naturalistic perspective: placing the individual or social consciousness, relative to whose object-constituting framework of categories knowledge is possible, beyond the scope of causal explanation. Or is it that both connections hold – producing then a *reductio* on relativism?

Given the central place of naturalism in our culture, the issues are of major philosophical interest. Equally, the comparative study of systems of thought and their conditions, which gives rise to these philosophical questions, is itself an absorbing and valuable enterprise. The two interests are and should be connected. If only to keep dogmatism and narrow-mindedness at bay, the philosopher should ideally have a keen sense of the historicality and socially specific character of his own forms of thought, and the theorist, of their inherently doubtful and problematic cognitive status. This of course that is much easier to urge than practise. For various understandable reasons, it is hard indeed to keep both these very different kinds of inquiry simultaneously in view.

Given these difficulties, the essays in this volume, though rather disparate in content, hang together well. They are unified partly by a usefully comprehensive introduction by Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes, and partly by the contribution from Barry Barnes and David Bloor, of the Science Studies Unit at Edinburgh. Had Barnes and Bloor not existed, the editors would have had to invent them. They put forward a Protagorean relativism – the cognitive community as the measure of all things – and they claim that it follows from the fact that beliefs have social antecedents. In doing so, they advance a position which the other contributors are in one way or another, explicitly or implicitly, united in opposing.

It is interesting to compare Barnes and Bloor's programme with that of an earlier Edinburgh practitioner of the naturalistic science of thought: David Hume. Their case against what they term "the rationalist" shares an important thesis with Hume's – the impossibility, on a naturalistic conception, of genuinely o *priori* knowledge. There is however a striking difference. Hume's sceptical considerations produce with alarming cogency the conclusion that we never have reason to form a general belief on inductive grounds. The obvious difficulty for Hume is that he appears to leave himself no legitimate ground for asserting his own scientific generalizations about beliefs as products of association. Barnes and Bloor's position does not involve this kind of problem; but only because they inconsequentially extract relativist conclusions from aceptical arguments. Take for example their "equivalence postulate" – that all beliefs, true or false, rational or irrational, have causal antecedents. Those of us who think a belief is well grounded only if caused by its object through an appropriate and reliable process can agree. But Barnes and Bloor silently read more into the postulate: they imagine that the "sociology of knowledge" will reveal various kinds of biasing interest or socioly induced distortion in the aetiology of all (?) beliefs, effectively screening them from their objects. If we accepted that, we would have to conclude that we have no reason to believe what we do, or less reason than we thought: not that we have perfectly good reason relative to the consensus of the community.

Once this Protagorean kind of relativism has been eliminated, the various issues begin to draw apart. Can we exclude the possibility of distinct but equally effective cognitive traditions, all of them capable of being progressively improved without ever converging? It is hard to see how we could – even if we imagine their effectiveness as being measured by standards of reasoning and norms of good explanation which we ourselves recognize, or whose force we could come to grasp. And if we reflect on the impossibility of excluding this, are we not led to reject certain classical conceptions of what it is for a sentence to have cognitive content? And encouraged to replace them by epistemic, or "anti-realist", conceptions which make relativism a coherent possibility?

It may indeed be so. The issues lead into an increasingly abstract philosophical examination of the implications of naturalism for epistemology and the philosophy of language. On the other hand, it does not follow from the merely epistemic possibility of optimal cognitive alternatives, that such alternative traditions in fact exist (or even that they could be constructed). It is here that sober history and ethnography make a vital contribution. There is, in Hollis's phrase, a basic "epistemological unity of mankind". Certainly there is also a diversity of styles of reasoning. The fact worries Ian Hacking, in his essay, because it seems to imply that the systems of thought which issue from these diverse styles, and whose cognitive content, on an anti-realist view of content, is constituted by them, will be "incommensurable" (desperately slippery word). But this is an unreal worry, because diverse styles of reasoning are ultimately responsive to criticism in terms of certain fundamental propensities to classify and infer on which – in fact – human beings spontaneously agree. By those natural ground-level standards, the cognitive tradition of the modern West emerges without rivals in the degree and progressiveness of its explanatory adequacy and aventual technical success. These cooling draughts of basic common sense are administered in the essays by Ernest Gellner, Robin Horton and Charles Taylor.

Gellner has written with great insight on these questions elsewhere. In this volume, it is the essays by Taylor and Horton which contain the most stimulus for anyone with an interpretative interest in the evolution and differentiation of systems of thought. Taylor points out that there is more than one kind of cognitive interest: more than one ideal of what it is to understand the absolute nature of things and one's own place in that absolute order. There is – to speak in shorthand terms – a type of orientation to the world which issues in a "Galilean" style of rationality. There is another type of orientation, whose underlying ideal is what Taylor calls "attunement", and Lévy-Bruhl, in a different context, called "mystical participation": the achievement of an unmediated apprehension of the underlying harmony, or unity-in-diversity, of things. As Taylor penetratingly says, the success of the Galilean style, internal as it is to its own criteria, nevertheless presents the other orientation with a challenge which it cannot ignore and cannot answer. Thus modernity disenchants the world.

The long paper by Robin Horton, "Tradition and Modernity Revisited", represents a new stage in an ambitious project; a project which stands in a great anthropological tradition and for which Horton's qualifications are in some ways unique. He restates and modifies, in fresh and interesting ways, themes which he has made familiar in previous essays. The fundamental contrast, as he now sees it, is between a "traditionalistic" conception of knowledge and "consensual" style of theorizing on the one hand, and a "progressivistic" conception of knowledge and "competitive" style of theorizing on the other. In fact (though he himself would disagree, for unconvincing reasons) Horton has moved closer to Weber's classic typology of legitimation. But he has yet, it seems to me, to face squarely the kind of issue raised in Taylor's paper: there can be a diversity of cognitive interests, as well as of modes of legitimation and styles of theorizing.

Taken together, Taylor's and Horton's papers suggest that we still need an unprejudiced re-examination of two past masters in this field – Lévy-Bruhl and Max Weber. They had no monopoly of wisdom, but they did grasp nettles which more recent studies hava too easily avoided.

Aspects of the absolute

Raymond Plant

MICHAEL ROSEN
Hegel's Dialectic and Its Criticism
192p. Cambridge University Press.
£30. 32484 6

SIMON SINGER
Hegel
128p. Oxford University Press.
£3.95 (paperback, £1.75).
0 19 287576 0

Michael Rosen has written an extremely good book on the central argument in Hegel's philosophy. In so doing he recent commentators in English have written about the dialectic it has been to be by way of exposition of its place in the general philosophy, together with attempts, for example in J. N. Findlay's work, to show that something like the dialectic is at work in the important arguments in modern philosophy (Wittgenstein on private language and Gödel's Theorem) and that in my view misguided, attempts to give a formal logical interpretation of the dialectic. Rosen's attitude is that the rationalist: he concentrates on the dialectic, is not seduced by modish attempts to domesticate the concept in ways acceptable to analytical philosophy and modern logic, and concludes that since the dialectic is central to Hegel and that ultimately its claims are absurd, "Hegel's philosophical enterprise is vitiated.

After an interesting but possibly rather aggressive chapter on how to go about interpreting a philosophical text, Rosen clearly shows the influence of one of his German mentors, Roseo when he turns to the central problem in approaching the issue of the dialectic. He claims in many places that the truth of his system can only be assessed in the total, comprehensiva, absolute sense. Any attempt to criticize an *aspect* of his thought is therefore rendered vacuous at the outset by his theory of truth. This also applies to criticizing the whole from anything that falls short of the absolute standpoint. While the dialectic is the method of attaining this standpoint, it is, as it were, a particular realization of a stage in the system, nevertheless Rosen argues that if we accept Hegal's account we are not in a position to understand the method whereby truth is attained unless we are at the standpoint of truth.

In this way we have a paradox: to criticise Hegal is to claim that the system does not attain validity its point of completion. But to criticise from any other than tha point of completion violates a crucial presupposition of the system itself, namaly, that only someone who has attained the final point can perceive the rationality of its attainment.

As Rosen realizes, this is a problem with ramifications outside Hegel's philosophy. If a philosophical method, or basic philosophical assumptions, cannot be grounded in reason, because acceptance of them may well define for us what reason is, then a philosophical position becomes a self-supporting system and the decision for or against it is one which reason cannot help us to take. To be put in this position, however, is to reject implicitly the rational claims of philosophy; we may be forced into the position of Nietzsche in *The Twilight of the Idols* – philosophical positions are not refuted (because they are irrafutable) but are to be overcome by acts of will. The search is for a method in philosophy which does not call itself into question, as Wittgenstein puts it.

The obvious solution as far as Hegel is concerned is to seek to detach the method of dialectic from the system which its operation realizes, so that tha method can be discussed on its own terms irrespective of our view of the truth of the system. This approach is deeply unHegelian but may be the only way around tha paradox which Roseo states and it is clearly the one which Marxist appropriators of the dialectic have to take. The major difficulty with the attempt is that there does not seem to be a very determinate method at work other than on which can be characterized in very general terms as "imminent critique". However, this critique does not operate with a kind of regularity or procedure which could be distilled, learned and taught as a methodological device. The form it takes varies a good deal, with the subject-matter. Hegel was therefore probably right in his own estimation that method and substance are intertwined.

Even if we seek to reflect on the dialectic at the very general level of imnanent critique, there are still grave difficulties. The operation of the critique on theories, modes of thought and activity is not to be seen just as o form of scepticism, for it produces a positive result: a transcendence of the negations of the old theory into a new, more synthetic truth. However, the assumption is that theories have common aspirations, that they are moving to similar goals and that ono can be seen as a dialectical advance on the other in the light of the goal. But how are these goals to be grounded? If they are simply presuppositions, should they not be subjected to critique? If they can be rationally grounded they would have to be so before the process of dialectic could get under way, just because the rationality of dialectical progress would depend upon them. In addition, if we consider the idea that immanent critique reveals contradictions within theories then it is not clear that such a theory could yield positive rasults merely because a conjunction of contradictory propositions implies aoy proposition whatsoever.

Rosen then moves on to an issoe which lies at the heart of his account of dialectic, an account which is as important as it is obscure. On a common view, and one which I have myself defended, the process of dialectic is that of developing and transforming our thoughts about something which at the level of the Understanding is imperfect and abstract – a *Vorstellung* or representation. Dialectical philosophy treats the *Vorstellung* in such a way that it is transformed into a concept, and hence an imperfect understanding becomes a fully rational, cognitive one. This process of transformation would involve the immanent critique of the *Vorstellung* of x so that our thinking about x becomes situated in a more and more general theoretical structure which overcomes the dilemmas exposed in thinking about x in isolation. However, Rosen rejects this view in favour of what he calls the generative approach, in which our thinking about x is not transformed by working on an ordinary thought about it but by an autonomous cognition of x, which we reach by a process of the "free evolution of thought" in *The Science of Logic*. Rosen supports this case with copious quotation from Hegel. However, I do not think he manages to given an account of what this process of autonomous generation consists in or how it could be rationally assessed. Of course, if Rosen is right, tha problem is Hegel's and not his, and in fact because he cannot give a rational account of the procedure, he takes the dialectic to ba absurd – "In my view the content-generating 'hyperintention' is sheer Neo-Platonic fantasy". Any rehabilitation of the dialectic would therefore depend upon a rehabilitation of soma kind of speculative Neoplatonism in which thought could generote its own content out of itself independent of experience.

There is no doubt a good deal in *The Science of Logic* which supports Rosen's view but I doubt whether, for example, one could understand the actual role of the dialectic in *The Philosophy of Right* in this way. The transformative (and I believe defensible) conception of dialectic seems to be at work here. However, Rosen has written a brilliant, stimulating, not to say irritating book which should place the dialectic high on the agenda of Hegel scholars for years to come.

Hegel was once asked by the French philosopher Victor Cousin to give a concise account of his philosopby. Hegel responded acidly by saying, "Monsieur, ces choses ne se disent pas succincterment." Obviously any commentator who does not agreed himself as expansively as Hegel's twenty-two volumes of philosophical writing has to come to terms with Hegel's own scathing estimation of summary and commentary. However, few critics have ever set themselves the daunting task confronting Peter Singer in his Past Masters volume. How do you provide an account of Hegel in less than 100 pages? There seem to be two possible strategies. The first is to try to bring the reader to coofront Hegel's basic philosophical doctrines in the spheres of logic, metaphysics and the theory of knowledge and then to trace the ramifications of these basic doctrines in particular areas of his thought, for example in art, history, politics and the natural world. The other way is to take Hegel's work in one of these spheres and use it to bring the reader more gradually to confront the core of his system.

The difficulty with the first approach is that without a long account of Hegel's development it is very difficult to present his metaphysical doctrines in a clear and persuasive way. Singer adopts the second approach, and introduces us to Hegel's system by means of the Philosophy of History. There is no doubt that he produces a reasonably clear and plausible account of Hegel's philosophy, although he possibly makes an error in introducing metaphysical concepts only later to the essay. The notion of *Geist*, for example, is not reached until half-way through, and the dialectic not clearly confronted until page 75 (out of 86). I believe he could have introduced these concepts alongside some of the more empirical material on history. In addition, I do not believe we are given a sufficient grasp of the systematic nature of Hegel's thought, or of why for Hegel systematic philosophy is an existential and cultural necessity. The failure to bring (his out leads to something of an undervaluing of Hegel's achievement. We are invited to see Hegel as an important historical figure, particularly in the context of his influence on the Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, but the excitement of his philosophical vision is obscured.

Nevertheless there are many very good discussions in the book, some of which are masterpieces of compression and argument. The chapter on the relation between freedom and community is a model of its kind and one could not hope for clearer accounts of the master/slava dialectic, or of Hegel's critique of Kant's moral theory.

Singer has written a valuable and useful introduction, but the reader is going to have to make efforts of his own if he is to get a proper impression from it of the scale of Hegel's achievement.

A new edition of Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy*, translated, with explanatory notes, by Valentine Rodger Miller and Reese P. Miller, has just been published (353pp. Dordrecht: Reidel. $59.90. 277 1451 7). It uses the Latin text of 1644 as its primary source, while taking account of the additional material that first appeared in the French translation by the Abbé Claude Picot in 1647.

Trafficking in dust

J. D. Fage

RAY A. KEA
Settlements, Trade, and Polities in the Seventeenth-Century Gold Coast
475pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £23.50.
0 8018 2310 2

The Gold Coast was the name by which the seaboard of what is today the West African republic of Ghana became known as a result of the activities of European sea-traders who flocked to it from the 1470s onwards. Their trade in gold-dust was of considerable value: Roy A. Kea quotes an estimate which suggests that until the nineteenth century, when the gold trade went into decline, the Gold Coast's exports may have averaged as much as 46,000 oz a year. If this were not enough, in the seventeenth century, the Gold Coast, having earlier been an importer of slaves, began also to contribute substantial numbers of men and women to the profitable European slave-trade to the Americas.

One consequence of this commercial interest was that the Gold Coast saw a conceptration of European activities that was probably greater than any found in other parts of black Africa before the nineteenth century. A possible exception would be the Congo-Angola region, but whereas European activities there quickly took a colonial form, with officials and missionaries seeking to dominate and change African society, on the Gold Coast they remained steadfastly commercial. While it is true that Europeans built substantial forts and castles on its shores, these were on land leased from the African rulers, and the latter were to a large extent equal partners in the new trade engendered by the European presence. Those forts and castles became ideal places from which outsiders could observe African societies which had not been substantially modified by their presence. (It would seem that the export slave-trade may not have caused much social change before the eighteenth century).

For his seventeenth-century study, Dr Kea makes good use of the not inconsiderable archaeological evidence now available, and he has also used material from historical, linguistic and geographical research and from published oral histories. But his main reliance is on the written evidence left by the contemporary European visitors. Some of this is to be found in archives, and Kea has used the surviving records of the major trading companies of the time, which were Dutch, English, Danish and Swedish. As is revealed by his admirably full notes and bibliography, however, his richest sources of information are undoubtedly the contemporary accounts of the Gold Coast and its peoples that achieved publication (some of them in French, German, or Portuguese as well), whether in their authors' own time or subsequently.

If Kea has sought to put the results of his exploitation of this wealth of material within a theoretical frame, this is not obtrusive. In essentials, what he has given us is a series of very closely woven descriptive tapestries which together cover those aspects of seventeenth-century Gold Coast society that were readily observable by the outsiders on the coast. In sum, these are its spatial arrangements, its socio-political structure, its military organization and, above all, what Kea calls its "commercial order" – production, distribution, labour, trading organizations and brokerage. These of course, are the subjects that bulk largest in the European accounts. It is then possible for him to go on from them and to discuss "commerce and class: the market, living standards and the social distribution of wealth." What he does not do is to look in any depth into the family and the household, or to discuss religion and ideology.

This is a pity, because Kea has produced a book which merits comparison with Georges Balandier's pioneering study, *La vie quotidienne au royaume de Kongo du XVIe ou XVIIe siècle*. But whereas the historian may have been technically more expert in stitching material together from a multitude of sources, it would seem to be the sociologist who has come closer to understanding the internal logic, the intrinsic philosophy of the system he is trying to recreate. It is true that a substantial number of Balandier's sources were Catholic priests who regarded some exploration of indigenous religion and thought as a necessary prolegomenon to their work of conversion, whereas I think that Kea has only one clerical witness, the Lutheran pastor Wilhelm Mueller, who served as chaplain to the personnel of a Danish fort. Nevertheless assiduous reading of some of the more prolific lay authors available would have produced quite a bit of information on Gold Coast systems of thought and belief.

It must not be supposed, however, that Kea is unwilling to put his European-derived material in a proper African perspective. He clearly has this in mind; he even goes to the length of translating his informants' figures for gold production or trade – which they normally give in terms of such European units as marks or ounces – into equivalents in the contemporary Gold Coast system of weights. Unfortunately his point of reference here is the *dauba*, practically the smallest unit in this system, the equivalent of the pennyweight, and the results may not be immediately intelligible even to a modern Ghanaian reader.

A much more serious criticism is that Kea does not seem to have given enough thought to the meaning and the value of what his European authors have written. There are two different points here. First, it is not always obvious to what extent the writers' observations of African society were moulded by their own socialization, by their European preconceptions of how society should be constituted and should operate. Kea should also have given more thought to a second and simpler problem, that of the authenticity of his material. This may be most easily illustrated, perhaps, by the remark that "one of the earliest descriptions" of gold-mining on the Gold Coast is that provided by Valentim Fernandes, for Fernandes never went to Africa himself, and what he says about the Gold Coast would seem to have been picked up from informants who had not gone closer to it than Senegal, about 1,000 miles away. Thus what Kea calls description can be no more than hearsay.

All is grist to the author's mill. Bosman, who lived on the Gold Coast for some fourteen years, is apparently not to be thought a better authority than Barbot, who is not known to have made more than two short trading visits, and who for his book drew on many earlier published accounts, including Bosman's. Or again, what much use is made of Villault de Bellefond, who wrote a very graphic account following a visit in 1661, to attempt is made to estimate the extent to which he may have borrowed from the Dutch writer Pieter de Marees of two generations earlier. If Kea was not prepared himself to go into questions of this kind, he should at least have warned his readers that they exist, and that there is now a swelling literature dealing with them, pioneered particularly by P. E. H. Hair and in the pages of the journal *History in Africa*.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons why those concerned with African history should pay attention to the evidence available from the seventeenth-century Gold Coast and, even if it has to be used with some circumspection, the sheer volume and the systematic arrangement of Dr Kea's book must make it an invaluable guide.

Back from the West

James Booth

WILLIAM LAWSON
The Western Scar: The Theme of the Been-to in West African Fiction.
151pp. Ohio University Press. £12.75 (paperback, £8.25).
0 8214 0649 3

Ever since Africans began to write novels the clash of cultures has been an unavoidable preoccupation, and central to this clash has been what William Lawson calls "the crisis of reentry". The individual who has been educated in Europe or the United States, and has absorbed the culture and values of the West, returns to find himself alienated and self-divided among his own people. His tensions serve as a metaphor for the larger issue, "Africa's still dynamic assimilation of Western cultures". The Been-to Theme has now perhaps run its course. Travel between Africa and the West is more frequent and independent literary cultures are developing within Africa. So the small pioneer élite of been-tos is no longer of central significance. This would seem a good moment then for a retrospective survey.

Lawson is to be given credit for breaking the ground. But, as an ideologically innocent American employing the tools of a somewhat aimlessly formalist literary criticism, he is not ideally suited to the task. The "development" which he traces is not particularly interesting ("The Rise of the Been-to Convention", "The Maturity of the Been-to Convention", "New Treatments of the Been-to Convention"), and his choice and ordering of texts is, as he is himself aware, sometimes forced. The sense in which Camara Laye's *The Radiance of the King* (whose protagonist is white) can be construed as "an embellishment on the been-to convention" or a "mirror view" of it, remains tenuous, especially as the novel was published in 1956, before all but one of the other novels which Lawson treats. He is reduced to suggesting that it is an unintentional embellishment.

Lawson's treatment of this novel shows him to be as eager as Charles Larson before him to find in Africa everything profound and spiritual which the West is supposed to lack. For him Laye's weird allegorical novel depicts a lucid opposition between "Western materialism" and "Islamic spirituality" or "traditional Islamic Africa" (some indication of the Historical Impact of Islam on West Africa – and its relation to other religions there would have been useful to give substance to this vague, over-general phrase). Where other readers have found an *assimilé*'s naive mixture of fantasy, imitation Kafka, surrealism and near-pornography, Lawson sees Laye's white protagonist Clarence – "in a general way" – treading "the Sufi path to salvation". The strong Christian implication in the central quest for a beautiful boy-king is invisible to Lawson, as is the schoolboy, quasi-homosexual voluptuousness of the style.

Ideological simplifications also affect the analysis of Ayi Kwei Armah's *Why Are We So Blest?* Only a particularly innocent American could find Armah's portrayal of the neo-colonial hegemony exercised by the characters Oppenheimer and Jeffarson "undefined" or "mysterious". Has Lawson not read Frantz Fanon or Basil Davidson or Ruth First? The word "neo-colonialism" does not appear in his book. He finds the character Aisha "implausible" and the final scene "past all credibility". Reflecting accurately the response of most readers to Modin's sexual meditations he says "The horror of the scene urges one to dismiss it in some way". But then he refers to "the grisly comedy of its physical impossibilities" and the "ludicrousness" of Aimée's "Do you love me?" as she kneels before Modin's bleeding penis. To find this question merely "ludicrous" is to fail to respond imaginatively to the novel which has led inevitably to it. There is neither comedy nor physical impossibility here. As for Aimée, the problem is not her plausibility, but the fact that Armah should make this pathological personality the most representative white in the novel. Her does her sado-masochism render the novel less effective, as Lawson argues. His own strong desire to "dismiss" the last scene indicates that the emotional and polemical power of the novel is greatly increased by Aisha's extremism. That is the problem.

For so short a book there are too many misspelt names and imprecisions: "mitigate against", "unequivocable", "contentionally". In themselves these are not important, but they form part of the wool-spinning element of the book. To call the world-view of the Umuahian villagers in Achebe's *No Longer At Ease* "Ibo" does not really illuminate its nature even though it may permit the sub-heading "Logos in Lagos". And in Armah's *Fragments*, we are told "does not actually become a transcendent been-to". Who does become "the transcendent been-to" then? And what exactly does the process entail? One could search among Lawson's abstractions for an answer, but would it be worth the trouble?

Seeing both sides

Darrell Bates

SYLVIA LEITH-ROSS
Stepping-Stones: Memoirs of Colonial Nigeria 1907–1960
Edited by Michael Crowder
191pp. Peter Owen. £10.95.
0 7206 0600 4

REX NIVEN
Nigerian Kaleidoscope: Memoirs of a Colonial Servant
278pp. Hurst. £13.50.
0 9905838 59 9

There was a time, so long ago now that it almost seems like a geological era, when books about Africa were inclined to overpraise the qualities and achievements of white men and to scorn those of the black. It was followed by a period when the roles were reversed and it was the turn of the white men to be treated with disdain and for indigenous peoples to be left untouched by any suggestion of blemish or blame. Now perhaps the time has come to try and strike a balance and present pictures that are as free from prejudice, emotion or bias as relations between Africa and the West can ever be.

Judged on this basis Sylvia Leith-Ross's *Stepping Stones* is an unusually good book. This stems partly perhaps from her own unorthodox background and from the wide range and variety of her experience. She was the daughter of an English admiral and a French mother, and was brought up both to be intelligently feminine in Catholic France and "not to be a nuisance" as she put it, in a country household of brothers in England. She first went out to Nigeria as a bride in 1907 when she was twenty-four. Within a year her husband was dead from blackwater fever but, as Michael Crowder points out in an informative and sensitive introduction, the land that caused her husband's death did not thereby become her enemy. Having lost a much loved husband she entered into a lifelong love affair with Nigeria and its people. This book is a record of a relationship which was to last, on and off, for sixty-two years.

She started her life in Nigeria as the wife of a political officer in the north, and there she returned to work on a Fulani grammar. Her various later employments brought her more closely into touch with the people and especially the women of other parts of the country but it is clear that her early years in the north were those that continued to the end to have pride of place in her affections. Her account of those early times, with all their discomforts and hazards and simple pleasures, is most moving and evocative. The later chapters are sometimes less full of zest. But wherever she found herself Mrs Leith-Ross strove, sometimes with painstaking determination, to set out and to understand both sides of every issue. She had her likes and dislikes, of course, like anyone else; among the latter were Lugard – "a small, thin man"– discontented European wives, missionaries with bigoted objections to tribal dances and polygamy, smart self-seeking African lawyers and, inevitably, the poor old Public Works Department with its dark green paint and red corrugated iron. All in turn receive the rough side of her otherwise gentle tongue. These few foibles do not stop her from being impartial and clear-headed enough to see through the cant to the realities of the colonial situation: on the one hand, the British officials, who, in what would nowadays be regarded as intolerable conditions of discomfort, ill-health and government paralysis, were as a rule so good at shepherding their charges through the early stages, and so much less good at coping with the awkwardness and haste of the final transition to Independence; and, on the other, the Africans, who, she believed, rarely felt either animosity or gratitude to the white men, simply regarding them and their culture, institutions and expertise as stepping-stones (whence the book's title) on their way to possessions and power.

One of the dilemmas facing those who write their memoirs when they retire from serving in distant places is whether to write for those who have had the same kind of experience or for a much wider market. It is not by any means an easy choice and, like many other books of this sort, Sir Rex Niven's *Nigerian Kaleidoscope* tends to fall between these two stools. It contains much background detail and expiscation that will be already well known to those who are familiar with this part of West Africa, and considerably more in the way of unimportant local personalities and places and events than will be of interest to those who are not. The well-remembered and well-recorded minutiae of procedures and practices in different parts of Nigeria will be of great value and interest to both old-timers and historians, but it is only when the author writes with feeling of the halcyon days when he and his wife lived and worked and travelled on foot in remote places in the north that the book really comes to life for the general reader. This is a pity, as Niven had experience of a wide range of places and situations in Nigeria over a span of more than forty years between 1921 and 1962, and much of what he says deserves a wider public than his book is likely to have.

Although the book is mainly concerned with the author's own career as an administrator in Nigeria he deals fairly and sympathetically with the many Africans who appear in his narrative, and, if his favourite people often turn out to be naked pagans or the Muslim inhabitants of the northern emirates, he is by no means the only European to have had this same bias. And who could not feel drawn to these proud Muslims of the north when it was one of them who was moved to alter the words "Send down thy heavenly wisdom from above" in the anglicized form of prayer designed by the author for the local House of Assembly to "Send thy wisdom", on the grounds that God is everywhere and there could therefore be no question of his sending anything up or down? There are several other such anecdotes to enliven the pages and soften one's vexation at author and publisher for a map which fails to show many places and even whole provinces that appear in the text.

Sale of historical MSS

Sarah Bradford

On Wednesday, March 28 Sotheby's sold an important collection of correspondence by Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough, the Madresfield Letters, acquired by the British Library through Quaritch for £12,625. The Duchess's correspondent, described in the catalogue as one Richard Jennings, her businessman, has been identified by Miss Frances Harris, the British Library expert working on the Blenheim Papers, as Robert Jennens whose wife was a relation of the Jeonings family's solicitor; and indeed some of the letters are addressed to Ann Jeooens. Robert Jennens, as it would appear from this correspondence and from letters of his among the Blenheim Papers, was the Duchess's confidential man of business. Although, or perhaps because, he was not her social equal, the difficult Sarah was on friendly terms with him and her correspondence with him was as vital, outspoken and waspish as she was herself.

Some of her items are previously unpublished (the correspondence was found up in some disorder so that several letters appeared to the editor of the printed edition of 1875 as incomplete), among them letters referring to the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, the first threat to the Hanoverian dynasty and indeed to the restored position of the Marlboroughs themselves. Sarah Churchill, once more at the hub of affairs, was in a position to assess the situation and to record reactions in London politics during crises. Her letters, written between 1710 and 1726, cover the period of her falling-out with Queen Anne; her travels to the Low Countries and Germany where the enthusiastic reception accorded the Duke compensated to some extent for their reversal of fortune at the English court; their restoration to favour following the accession of George I; and such concerns as the management of estates and elections and the building of Blenheim. Smarting at their disgrace in the winter of 1710 she wrote: "as the building will never bee finish'd st Blenheim it can never bea any advantage or pleasure to my lord authoritough or his family, but will remain now as a monument of ingratitude, instead of what was once intended . . ."

Political duplicity was also the theme of the most expensive lot in the sale, the private diary kept by Faisal I, Amir of Hejaz and King of Iraq, during the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, bought for £121,000 by a purchaser identified only as "Nader". Faisal attended the conference as the representative of his father Hussein at the suggestion of T. E. Lawrence who was a member of the Foreign Office delegation and acted as Faisal's interpreter and hence his mouthpiece. Here, as Sotheby's cataloguer points out, is Faisal speaking for himself. The diary, written in Arabic, begins at the end of December 1918 and opens with a list of his draft proposals for the establishment of six independent Arab states. While staying in England awaiting the opening of the conference, Faisal and Lawrence had a secret meeting with Chaim Weizmann, after which Faisal recorded in his diary his thoughts on the relationship of the Jews and the Arabs and the necessity of a Palestinian state. Faisal, although a newcomer to international politics, was nobody's fool, confiding to his diary even before the Conference began that Britain might "sell the Arabs quite cheaply" if it became expedient, i.e. give in to French interests in Syria. Despite the support of Lawrence and of Lawrence's mentor, D. G. Hogarth, who was a member of the commission of enquiry on Syria, the final result was a carve-up between Lloyd George and Clemenceau: France gained Syria and within a year was to march on Damaseus and expel Faisal.

Faisal, subtle and a realist, was quite capable of perceiving the labyrinthine paths of international power politics; understandably he was unaware of the no less tortuous nature of Lawrence's private feelings. Lawrence's father died of pneumonia during the conference; Lawrence, receiving a telegram saying he was ill, left for England but, finding his father already dead, returned immediately to Paris. It was only a week later when he had to return to England for the funeral that he informed Faisal what had happened. Faisal was impressed, noting enthusiastically in his diary, "Consider such honesty, such faithfulness, such devotion to duty and such control of one's personal feelings! These are the highest qualities of man, which are found in but few individuals." In fact Lawrence's feelings for the man who had sired him illegitimately, and indeed for his mother who, he once said, "made impossible demands for love", were ambivalent. Unrewarding to the end, his father left his money not to his bastard children but to his legitimate first wife, the joyless woman known in Dublin as "the Holy Viper".

The sale also included interesting autograph material by English statesmen, among them a letter of May 21, 1597 by Burghley and endorsed by Essex mentioning Raleigh (£1,375 to Sotheran) and one by Essex to the Duc de Bouillon of December 1596 hinting at secret Protestant intrigues (£1,155 to Quaritch). A delightful Disraeli item, the autograph manuscript of his election address at Taunton in June 1835, contained three passages omitted from the printed version, including one both characteristic and revealing of the thirty-year-old Disraeli

Having entered life at an earlier age than any public man at present in existence, aspiring as I do to a twofold reputation both as author & a statesman, I have of course to encounter that host of enemies, which "envy, malice & all uncharitableness" soon rally round ardent & ambitious youth. But this opposition has never cost me a pang or drawn for a moment the color from my cheek; on the contrary it has only fortified my native courage, & impelled me to a fresh development of my powers . . . (£1,100 to Quaritch).

Gladstone was certainly to be Disraeli's most significant enemy, and the passage of the 1867 Reform Bill one of Disraeli's few major victories over the man he later described as the "Arch-Villain". Three important letters by Gladstone to Lord John Russell centring upon the critical vote of April 13, 1867 were bought by the Fine Arts Society for prices considerably higher than those normally paid for Gladstone's voluminous correspondence. The same buyer also acquired a body of Churchill material including the working papers for *A History of the English Speaking Peoples* (£1,100) and working papers for Randolph Churchill's biography of his father (£550).

Two papers from the autograph manuscript of the first edition of Darwin's *Origin of Species* were sold for £8,800 (Falk) and a five-page letter by Darwin defending his evolutionary theories against Mivart's attack in *Genesis of Species* (1871) was bought by the Paris dealer Charavay for £3,190. Mechanical evolution was represented by what must be the best letter from Rolls to Royce ever to come up for sale. Dated February 4, 1909, the letter discusses both their aero-engines and their cars and was sold for £3,520 to Long-Hamilton, with, it is rumoured, Rolls-Royce failing to secure this important document at a fraction of the price of one of their products. Rolls was certainly the prototype of a car salesman – planning a trip to the South of France he wrote: "I shall get into the thick of the swells who are rolling in money (50% are snobs) . . . once you've got a few dukes and duchesses the rest follow like sheep . . .", and indeed the letter would provide copy for generations of Rolls-Royce advertisements – "The finest offer we can make to buyers is 'the best car & and the best treatment' . . .". Similar claims no doubt lured passengers aboard the *Titanic*; a fifteen-page eyewitness account of the disaster by a survivor, Miss Laura Mabel Francatelli, sold for £2,640 to McGuire. Miss Francatelli was secretary to Lady Duff-Gordon, wife of Sir Cosmo, a controversial figure in the subsequent enquiries into the happening of that fatal night, and her account made the highest price recorded for a Titanic document.

All is grist

William Thomas

MICHAEL LAINE
Bibliography of Works on John Stuart Mill
159p. University of Toronto Press, distributed in the UK by International Book Distributors. £26.50.
0 8020 2414 9

Bibliographies are literary junk-yards. One cannot ignore them, for they invariably contain some rare and valuable things, but these have to be dug out of a mass of detritus which consists of one the transience of controversies once thought important and the shortness of academic reputations. A list of works on even so clear and accessible a writer as Mill is, due to contain some useless items, particularly since the great Toronto edition of his works began inexorably to qualify and disprove earlier theses. But despite the price this is a remarkably good value. Michael Laine, editor of the Toronto team, is also the *Mill News Letter*, which has been sharing their finds with Mill scholars all over the world, keeping them informed about the progress of the edition and offering its pages as a forum for the discussion of various aspects of Mill's work. This volume is based on the cumulative bibliography which has been appearing in *MNL* over the years, and its first merit is that it provides a consolidated alphabetical list, by author. Laine has further helped the faint-hearted by making some sensible exclusions. He has not listed textbooks of philosophy, economics and political science in which Mill is mentioned (though one is glad to see exceptions made for G. A. Sabine, and for Sheldon Wolin's brilliant *Politics and Vision*), surveys which deal with Mill in passing, dissertations and theses (unless subsequently published) and the more trivial newspaper comment from Mill's lifetime.

That still leaves nearly two thousand items. There are appendixes on verses about Mill, cartoons (mostly from his political career) and a list of "portraits and other representations" (which should help publishers to give Watts's flinty portrait a rest for a while). An index to topics provides a fascinating measure of the relative popularity of Mill's works: far more is written about *On Liberty* and *Utilitarianism* than about the *System of Logic*. If that is a reflection of the preferences of university courses, it suggests that the academic comment in this bibliography may prove more ephemeral, and that its real value for scholars will lie in the thoroughness of its survey of comment and criticism from Mill's contemporaries. For that reason one notices the omission of some quite well-known items: Harriet Grote's judgment on the *Autobiography* in the *Lewin Letters* is not here. Nor is David Masson's "Memories of London in the Forties", which appeared in *Blackwood's* in 1908 and which records Mill's oft-quoted remark about Bentham's disciples, "And I am Peter, who denied his Master." A final warning for those whose views on Mill have just been given to the world: the list includes no items published after 1978.

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